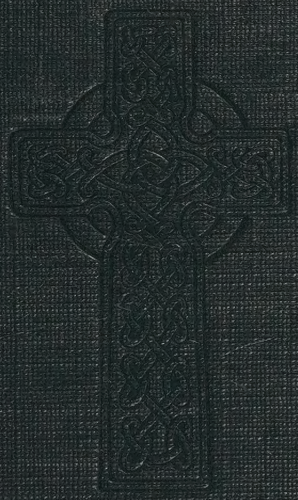

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The Crisis in
AMERICAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

The Crisis in AMERICAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

A Study of the Issue between
American Lutheranism *and* Old Lutheranism

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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THE CENTURY CO.

New York *London*

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To the Memory of

MY FATHER

OLAF WILHELM FERM

CONSECRATED PASTOR
DEVOTED STUDENT
TRUSTED EXECUTIVE

Whose Labors Were Generously Given for More than a Quarter of a Century to Lutheranism in America

(December 11th 1853–January 12th 1911)

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

FOREWORD

I have just returned from the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. It was a noble gathering, typical of the loyalty to their Church and to its Lord that is characteristic of the followers of the intrepid Luther. More clearly and forcefully than written annals or spoken eulogy, the host of living Alumni—Lutheran ministers all—who returned to the old battlefield town to join in the centennial celebration, bore witness to the great service that the Gettysburg Seminary has rendered to Lutheranism in America.

Yet there was little mention of the founder of the Seminary, who was for thirty-eight years its first professor and president—Dr. Samuel S. Schmucker. In the excellent account of its history published in the commemorative volume, there is an adequate account and just appraisal of his work. But little was said of him in the addresses delivered throughout the three days that we were together; and when his name was mentioned, there was usually a trace of apologetic in the reference.

That seems odd, you say. Ah, then, you do not know. You do not know that Dr. Schmucker advocated what was known in his day as "American Lutheranism", that he lost out, and that "American Luther-

anism'' passed with him, passed into the limbo of things that might have been. There is something tragic—nobly, quietly tragic—in the story. The man who did more than any other to establish and strengthen the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States, who for many years drafted its most important documents and was its acknowledged leader, who founded the Seminary and College at Gettysburg and gave his life to the service of the first of these institutions, toward the end of his days lost his leadership. He was no longer Lutheran enough. His position had not changed; but all about him had. ''He had fallen behind'', the historian puts it, ''in the progress of conservative Lutheranism''.

The story of Dr. Schmucker's loss of leadership, which marked the turning-point in the history of the Lutheran Church in America, is told—and well told—in this volume by Dr. Ferm. It should be widely read, not only by Lutherans, but by all who are interested in movements toward Christian unity and in the social psychology of religious denominations and national groups.

Educated at Princeton, and on terms of friendship with leading ministers of all the larger denominations, Dr. Schmucker is one of the outstanding figures in the history of movements toward Christian unity. His Overture for Christian Union, submitted to the various evangelical denominations in 1838, proposed a federation of their official bodies which was better conceived than the Evangelical Alliance, upon the basis of individual membership, which was established in 1846. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America,

which succeeded it sixty years later, is in line with Dr. Schmucker's proposal.

From the middle forties, Dr. Schmucker waged a losing battle. The Great Immigration brought hosts of conservative Germans to America. A strong tide of strict confessionalism rose about him. Then he blundered amazingly—he was responsible for the anonymous publication and distribution of the "Definite Synodical Platform", which proposed to revise, amend and purge of "errors" the Augsburg Confession. Judged simply as strategy, that was unbelievably poor tactics. "American Lutheranism" never rallied thereafter.

Dr. Ferm has written an interesting account for the general reader of this Crisis in the history of the Lutheran Church in America, based upon a dissertation which he submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Judgments of Dr. Schmucker will differ, as they always have. I am inclined to think, however, that his figure will loom greater, rather than less, as the passage of years lends perspective to the view of American Church history, and as we draw nearer to the realization of his dream of Christian Union.

Luther A. Weigle

Yale University.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is with grateful appreciation that I here record how highly I value the associations and wholesome influences that have come to me as a student during the three years of graduate study in The Divinity School of Yale University in personal contact with members of its Faculty—recognized leaders of thought and exponents of sound Christian piety. In more ways than I could here relate have the friendship and confidence of the Dean, Charles Reynolds Brown, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D., been to me a source of inspiration.

I am especially indebted to Douglas Clyde Macintosh, Ph.D., Dwight Professor of Theology and Chairman of the Department of Religion in The Graduate School of Yale University, for his stimulating and constructive courses in theology and philosophy and for his personal interest and counsel at every turn during my residence as graduate student. His conservative encouragement was for me a continual challenge.

To Luther Allan Weigle, Ph.D., D.D., Litt.D., Sterling Professor of Religious Education in Yale University, I owe the chief debt of thanks, not only for suggesting the subject of this study, but for constant help at every stage of the preparation. His first-hand acquaintance with the Lutheran Church and with my problem gave promise from the beginning of shared interest and valuable counsel.

I wish also to acknowledge my indebtedness to the venerable Henry Eyster Jacobs, D.D., LL.D., for many years President of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and to Abdel Ross Wentz, Ph.D., D.D., Professor of Church History in The Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for their generous help and encouraging interest.

Most cordial assistance was offered by the Curator of the Library of The Lutheran Historical Society at Gettysburg, by the

Librarians of The Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, and of The Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, as well as by the Staff of the Library of Yale University.

VERGILIUS FERM

West Haven, Connecticut
August 31st 1926

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THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

CHAPTER I

THE CONFESSIONAL POSITION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FROM 1742 TO 1818

The "Definite Synodical Platform" which made its appearance in the General Synod of Lutheran churches in 1855, articulating the position of "American Lutheranism" over against "Old Lutheranism", and the bitter controversy provoked by it are not to be understood apart from a survey of the organization, growth, and doctrinal character during the preceding century of the Lutheran Church in its development upon American soil. Inasmuch as this document of 1855 proposed a definite confessional basis upon which the American Lutheran Church should take its stand, pointing out certain alleged errors in the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church in Europe, it is necessary, to the understanding of the subsequent controversy, to trace the attitude of conspicuous American Lutheran leaders and of organized synods toward these confessions and the special doctrines controverted. *

* A Chart, prepared especially for this study, is inserted inside the back cover as an aid to the reader in following the development and growth of the various synodical bodies of the American Lutheran Church and the relationship which they sustained to the General Synod.

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg is acclaimed universally as the Father of the American Lutheran Church. Up to his arrival in Philadelphia in 1742, the Lutheran churches in the American colonies were loosely organized units with little or no bond of union.[1] They easily became the prey of any ecclesiastical propagandist who might find his way to their pulpits. A dearth of trained ministers together with no common ground of unity threatened the annihilation of this branch of the Protestant church in the New World. The immediate provocation to the awakening of the conscience of the Lutheran divines in Germany to the critical situation among their children across the sea was the visit to America, in 1741, of Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian, who, posing as a Lutheran, assumed leadership in these scattered churches. The leaders at Halle sensed the peril and sent Muhlenberg as their missionary to plant their church on a more solid basis and gather the scattered emigrants into a closer fellowship. The motto which the young pastor took as an expression of his life's work, that of *Ecclesia plantanda,* as early as 1748 became a reality in the formation under his leadership of the first synodical body of the American Lutheran Church, called then by the name of the "United Pastors" and now known as the

The names of conspicuous leaders, important publications, institutions, and general movements are indicated in their proper chronological order and relationship.

The Chart begins with the coming to Philadelphia in 1742 of the Patriarch, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, and concludes with the great schism of the Lutheran Church in 1867.

[1] *Cf.* H. E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States,* pp. 209–210 (Vol. IV in *The American Church History Series*).

Ministerium of Pennsylvania. Viewed in the light of the subsequent years in the rapid growth and influence of this organization and the formation of other district synods, it becomes clear that Muhlenberg deservedly has gained the title of the Patriarch of the American Lutheran Church.

To these American shores Muhlenberg brought with him the spiritually rich atmosphere and devotion to practical piety which were characteristic of the Lutheran school of Spener and Francke.[2] The pietistic movement, then prevalent in Germany, came partly as a reaction to the period of Protestant scholasticism and to the period of formal orthodoxy of the preceding century. The Lutheran symbolical books culminating in the closed system presented in the "Formula of Concord" in 1580 had set the limits to theological inquiry. Subsequent theological productions had become systematic treatments by way of elucidation and defense of that which had already been written.[3] Spener, who led the movement of reaction, did not place himself outside of the inherited confessional orthodoxy, but rather gave emphasis to those doctrinal features which, by their character, tended to promote practical piety. His attitude toward the historic symbols of the Lutheran Church was characterized by a freedom not customary in that day.[4] Such influences as were obtained

[2] *Cf.* Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[3] "Protestant Scholasticism", in *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, Chap. VIII, by A. C. McGiffert.

[4] "Spener was an orthodox Lutheran, and made no attack upon current theology. Nevertheless his theological attitude was very different from that of most of his contemporaries. He deprecated what seemed to him an over-emphasis upon the theoretical side of religion, and insisted that personal piety, the bent of the heart and life, was far more

through personal contact and theological training directed Muhlenberg away from any position of symbolical rigidity, and yet preserved him from the more extreme separatist movement of those pietists who found their fellowship with the Moravians.

In the light of this background must be understood his ordination certificate, dated at Leipzig in 1739 and containing his confessional position:

> In agreement with apostolic doctrine, through the public and pious rite, we commend to him the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments, according to the call and rule given in the writings of the prophets and apostles, the sum of which is contained in the three symbols—The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—in the Augsburg Confession, A. D. 1530, laid before Emperor Charles V, in the Apology of the same, in Dr. Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, in the articles subscribed in the Smalcald Convention and in the Formula of Concord, written A. D. 1576 on controverted points of doctrine. For he solemnly promised that he would propose to his hearers what would be conformed and consentient to these writings, and that he would never depart from the sense they give.[5]

That Muhlenberg maintained a continued attachment to the Pietistic movement is revealed by a tract which he published, only two years after his ordination, while still in Germany, in its defense over against criticisms

important than doctrinal soundness. He felt, too, that the theologians of the day were interested in the less rather than the more important doctrines, and he wished to bring into prominence those which had direct effect upon the personal religious life, particularly the doctrines of salvation. The value of a belief, he maintained, depended wholly upon its practical bearing. He distinguished between essential and non-essential elements in the traditional faith, and assumed a freer attitude than was customary toward the official symbols."—McGiffert, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–159.

[5] This certificate of ordination, in possession of Rev. F. A. Muhlenberg, D.D., at one time professor in the University of Pennsylvania, is translated by Dr. W. J. Mann in *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. VI, p. 28.

offered by a representative of the orthodox school.[6]

The chief source of information of these pioneer days revealing the work and the confessional attitude of the Patriarch of the American Lutheran Church is to be found in his reports sent over to Halle and published there.[7]

Calls came from every direction for the Halle missionary. Time and again his organizing ability had opportunity to reveal itself. Many of the congregations were divided. Schisms had been produced by vagabond preachers. Writing of church constitutions and drawing up orders of worship, ordination requirements, hymn-books—such Muhlenberg was called upon to do. He naturally placed the stamp of his own character upon the American Lutheran Church of this period.

As early as 1747, having been called to the Monocacy settlement in Maryland to settle the difficulties which had arisen through Moravians, he drew up a Formula of Government for the Lutheran Church at that place.

[6] W. J. Mann, *Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, pp. 25–26.

[7] These are known in German as *Hallesche Nachrichten* and in English as the *Halle Reports.* The edition consulted in this study is that of 1787 published at Halle under the title, *Nachrichten von den Vereinigten Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinen in Nord-America, Absonderlich in Pensylvanien. Mit einer Vorrede von D. Johann Ludewig Schulze.* The first part has been translated into English by C. W. Schaeffer, Part 1, Reading, Pa., 1882, under the title *Halle Reports.*

Further source material, viz., the diaries and correspondence of the Patriarch and other early Lutheran divines, the Halle Documents transcribed from the Halle Archives by Dr. Germann, the written Protocol of the Synod which begins in 1781, are found in the volume entitled *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821.*

The Preamble and first article contain the confessional basis proposed by him and adopted by the congregation:

Whereas we the subscribers enjoy the inestimable liberty of conscience under the protection of our Gracious Sovereign King George the II and his representatives our gracious superiors of this Province, and have used this precious privilege since our first settling here at Monocacy, till this day in worshiping God Almighty according to the Protestant Lutheran persuasion, grounded in the Old and New Testament and in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and other Symbolical Books, we will pray for our most gracious Sovereign. . . . And whereas we are at times disturbed by pretended ministers that style themselves Lutherans . . . and cause strife, quarrels and disturbance among the congregation, we the subscribers . . . of the Protestant Lutheran congregation, erect and agree and bind ourselves to the following articles, in primis:

1. That our German Lutherans confess their adherence to the Holy Scriptures and also to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and the other Symbolical Books.[8]

On August 14, 1748, St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia was consecrated. In his report of this event to the Halle authorities, Muhlenberg writes:

August 14, the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, the invited preachers and delegated elders of our United Congregations assembled in

[8] These articles written by the hand of the Patriarch are still in the possession of the church at Frederick to-day. The original is in English! The articles are printed in full on page 19 of *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran Church in America—1820–1920*, by A. R. Wentz.

Of this event, Muhlenberg writes to Halle: "Before we began divine service I had the Church-Book given me and wrote in it a few propositions and articles in English, among other things the following in substance: that our German Lutherans acknowledged the holy Word of God in the Prophetic and Apostolic Writings, moreover the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other symbolical Books. . . . I read such publicly before the Congregation and explained it to them in German, with the supplement: that whoever is and would remain such a Lutheran should sign his name." Translated from pp. 234–235 of *Hallesche Nachrichten*, edition of 1787.

and before Pastor Brunnholtz's dwelling, and went to the church in procession. . . . At the beginning of the service the hymn *"Komm heiliger Geist, Herre Gott, erfüll mit,"* etc., was sung antiphonally and in harmony. All the preachers present stood around the altar, and all the delegates from the congregations formed a semicircle on the organ-loft. . . . Thereupon one of us made a short address, calling to mind that the foundation-stones of this church had been laid with the intention that in it the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine, according to the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, and the unaltered Augsburg Confession and all the other Symbolical Books, should be taught. . . . Then the whole church, and its parts, the pulpit, the baptismal font, and altar were again consecrated to the use of the only saving Word and the Holy Sacraments, according to our Symbolical Books; and the Church Board (*das Kirchen Collegium*) of Philadelphia, had to promise publicly and orally that they would strive with God's assistance to keep the church (according to the foregoing consecration) unto their children and children's children, for the aforenamed purpose, as long as God would protect it from fire, water, and other accidents. . . . Then the preachers and delegates knelt and with hearty and earnest prayer commended to the Omnipresent God the church now named, St. Michael's.[9]

Twenty-one years later, on June 25, 1769, Muhlenberg as senior member of the Ministerium again dedicated a Lutheran Church, this time Zion Church in Philadelphia. His confessional position remains the same, as is seen in his report of the occasion to Halle:

On the morning of Sunday, June 25, the preachers present at the Synod assembled and after eight o'clock went to St. Michael's Church where it was arranged to meet the delegates of the United Congregations also, and from there proceeded with bells ringing to Zion's Church in the following order. . . . I went before the altar and all the other preachers around the altar railing, and I declared that by God's grace and mercy on May 16, 1766, the

[9] Translation of passages found on pp. 284–285 in *Hallesche Nachrichten*, edition of 1787, and set down in *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821* (Phila., 1898), pp. 7–8.

foundation-stone of this building was laid with the reading of God's Word and prayer, and given the name "Zion," that on June 11, 1766, in the presence of the United Ministerium, the corner-stone was laid, and the entire building has, under the special gracious providence of the merciful King of Zion, Immanuel, progressed so far that it is now to be consecrated and be set aside for use. Namely, it is to be and herein is consecrated to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the use of the German Evangelical Lutheran congregation which confesses the pure evangelical doctrine upon the foundation of the Apostolic and Prophetic writings, the two holy sacraments instituted by Christ, according to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and other symbolical books.[10]

The examination of candidate John Nicholas Kurtz, in 1748, for the office of the Lutheran Ministry by the "United Pastors" likewise throws light upon the confessional character of the early church. The written examination questions reveal the importance which the Fathers gave to religious experience as a prerequisite for the office, as well as to *Seelsorge*.[11]

[10] Translated from *Hallesche Nachrichten*, pp. 1245–1246.

[11] "I. The candidate is to prepare a sketch of his life . . . narrate: 1. His first awakening; 2. How God furthered the work of grace in his heart; 3. What moved him to study for the holy ministry, and where, in what branches and under whose direction, he has attempted to prepare himself. II: What theological books does he have? III. Mention the Chief Divisions of Theology, and answer the following questions concerning—1. What is Theology? 2. A general answer to the question: What is Sin, and a more specific statement as to what is Original Sin? 3. Describe the Sin against the Holy Ghost; 4. Give an extended description of the Justification of the Sinner before God, and confirm it with proof texts; 5. What is Saving Faith? 6. Whether and in how far are good works necessary to Salvation? 7. What is Sanctification, and how is it promoted? 8. In how far is Death the Wages of Sin (a), in the converted, (b), in the unconverted? IV. . . . V. Give an exegetical explanation of Luke 16: 8. VI. Prepare from this the theme and skeleton of a sermon, with application. VII. Describe the true character and duties of an evangelical preacher. VIII. How an evangelical preacher should conduct himself towards the dying who confess, that they are sinners in general, without confessing any special sin? IX. Whether, and in how far evangelical preachers

Only one question dealt particularly with Lutheranism: "IV. Whether our Evangelical Lutheran is the only justifying and saving faith, and upon what scriptural foundations does it rest?" To which the candidate replied in a very general way:

> I hesitate to say, yea, I dare not say, that those, who are outside of this doctrine, who by their name fail to confess this doctrine, should be condemned. Yet, to the question, whether our Evangelical Lutheran doctrine be the only justifying and saving doctrine, I reply: Yea and Amen. . . . With us the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity. . . . Now, since the fundamental articles of the Lutheran doctrines clearly and plainly have their foundation in the Word of God, and since they are necessary to salvation, they must be the most correct and the best. If we examine our Symbolical Books, which contain the principles of our doctrine or religion, we will find that they are *taken from* the Word of God and *substantiated by* the Word of God. Consequently they belong to the class of symbols, which set forth the correct divine truth.[12]

Kurtz, then, gave the following confessional pledge:

> To teach in my congregation nothing, whether publicly or privately, but what harmonizes with the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and, to this end, to study them diligently.[13]

In the same year a Liturgy was drawn up by Pastors Muhlenberg, Brunnholtz, and Handschuh. It forms the basis of the "Common Service" used in the United Lutheran Church to-day.[14] Concerning the

can and should be in subordination to one another?"—*Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821*, p. 19.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[13] *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821*, p. 21.

[14] Dr. Wentz concurs in this statement.—A. R. Wentz, *The Lutheran*

preparation of this Liturgy the Patriarch has something to say on the ritual for the communion service which becomes important in the light of the later controversy over the "Definite Synodical Platform":

April 28th we held a conference at Providence and deliberated about a suitable liturgy [*Agende*] to be used by us and introduced into our congregations. Thus far, we had used a small formulary, but had nothing definite . . . we thought it best to wait for the arrival of more laborers and to acquire a better knowledge of the conditions of things in this country. To adopt the Swedish Liturgy did not appear to be advantageous. . . . Neither could we select a liturgy according to the forms to which every individual had been accustomed, since almost every country town or village has its own. For this reason we took the liturgy of the Savoy congregation of London as the basis. . . . But, notwithstanding this, Herr Pastor Wagner and Stoever and some other narrow-minded men took occasion to instigate against us some simple-hearted people by the pretext that we ought to introduce the Liturgy of Würtemberg or of Zweibrücken; and they made them also believe that we intended to lead them away from the Lutheran doctrine and church order. For instance! We thought of using at the distribution of the blessed bread and cup the very words of the Lord Jesus: "Take and eat, this is the body of Jesus Christ," etc.; "Take and drink, this cup is the new testament in the blood of Jesus Christ," etc. At the baptism of children we intended to ask the sponsors, "Do you in the name of this child renounce?" etc. On these points our opponents tried to produce agitation even before we had finished our work. We consequently made the changes at once, as the troubled consciences wanted it, saying, "This is the true body," etc., "This is the true blood," etc., and, addressing the child in baptism, "Peter, Paul, Mary, dost thou renounce?" etc.[15]

Church in American History, p. 60. The Church Agenda (Liturgy) of 1748, together with critical notes, is printed on pp. 13–18 in *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821.*

[15] Quoted by W. J. Mann, pp. 184–185, in *Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.* The word "true" is found in the printed agenda. "The insertion of 'true' was a concession to Revs. Wagner, Stöver,

The constitution prepared for St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia in 1762 by Muhlenberg became a model throughout the Lutheran Church in America. It was prepared carefully and deliberately. Its significance in American Lutheran Church history has been duly recognized by historians.[16] Of interest here is the doctrinal basis therein presented:

CHAP. I. CONCERNING TEACHERS.

§ 1. The now-living teachers and their regularly called successors shall at ordinary seasons, on Sundays and on Festive Days, at funerals and other solemn occasions, proclaim publicly, openly,

etc."—Foot-note on p. 18 of *Documentary History*, etc. See also *Nachrichten von den Vereinigten Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinen in Nord-America, absonderlich in Pensylvanien. Mit einer Vorrede von D. Johann Ludewig Schulze—Halle—1787—Neu herausgegeben mit historischen Erläuterungen und Mittheilungen aus dem Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle von Dr. W. J. Mann, Dr. B. M. Schmucker, unter Mitwirkung von Dr. W. Germann—Erster Band*, p. 449. (German quotation incomplete.)

[16] "If in his whole life Muhlenberg had done nothing else of a remarkable character, the framing and introduction of this constitution in the Philadelphia congregation would suffice to crown his head with lasting honor."—Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

"This constitution continues to live and exert its influence far and wide throughout the Lutheran Church in all parts of America. . . . A study of this constitution is necessary for all who would understand the church government within at least three of the four general bodies in the Lutheran Church in America."—H. E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, pp. 262–264.

"It was carried by the ministers throughout the wide limits of Pennsylvania and adjacent States. It was inherited by new synods formed out of the Pennsylvania Ministerium. It was carefully studied, and *its main features adopted by the preparer of the Formula of Government and Discipline of the Synods of West Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and then became that of the General Synod.* [The italics are the present writer's.] The great body of the congregations in this country, outside of the bounds of recent German synods in the west, are organized on this plan."—Dr. B. M. Schmucker, *The Organization of the Congregation in the Early Lutheran Churches in America*, p. 39; and quoted by Dr. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 263. See also p. 63 in Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History.*

concisely, clearly, thoroughly, and with edification God's Word in conformity with the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets and in accordance with the unaltered Augsburg Confession. . . .[17]

The other symbolical books are nowhere mentioned!

No systematic treatment of theology came from the pen of Muhlenberg. His time was preoccupied in missionary effort and organization. His reverence for the historic confessions is markedly different from the Lutheran divines preceding Spener.[18] His *Halle Reports* reveal the emphasis he placed on the appropriation of Christian truths to life.[19] The passages dealing with his personal conversation with folk are classic.[20] He courted the friendship of all classes. The great evangelists Tennent and Whitefield, as well as other Protestant leaders, were friends to this early group of Lutheran leaders. Denominational loyalty did not mean to them aloofness from others.[21] In fact, so

[17] The Constitution is printed in full on pp. 435–445 in Vol. II of *Nachrichten von den Vereinigten Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinen in Nord-America, absonderlich in Pensylvania*, edition by W. J. Mann, W. Germann; also in the edition of 1787, pp. 962–971.

[18] *Cf.* Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

[19] Preaching, he said, is to be practical. Truths should be presented "not dryly, but practically; represent the Christian religion not as a burden, but as a pleasure." The Lord's Supper should be presented as a "help in conversion," as a "treasure above all treasures," and not as some "too dryly, too legalistically, too gently," "too lofty," etc. See pp. 54–55 of *Documentary History*, etc.

[20] Dr. H. E. Jacobs offers a selection, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–234.

[21] E. g., Muhlenberg writes: "October 18, about ten o'clock in the forenoon we went to the church and took the children along. The following ministers joined us: Messrs. Duchee and Ingliss, of the High Church; President Dr. Finley, of the Jersey Presbyterian High School, Senior Tennent, a Presbyterian preacher from Newark, and finally Mr. Whitefield, and with him a number of English friends, so that the church was filled with English and Germans, and the children were crowded. Mr. Whitefield went into the pulpit, offered a fervent and impressive

great was the Patriarch's regard for the Anglican Church and its doctrinal position that he was willing to pay the following tribute of fraternity:

> Our nearest and best friends and well-wishers are the upright, pious teachers, elders, and members of the Established Church. They love, protect, and stand by us wherever they can, and we in turn do for them, out of love, whatever lies in our power. They favor us and give us perfect liberty, according to the Word of God, both to teach and to live according to the articles of our faith. We accord to them, cheerfully, the preference, because they have the mother-church which is established by law. Their articles of faith have been extracted from the Word of God as well as ours; their church prayers are taken from the Holy Bible as well as ours; they have the two holy sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as we; their explanations of their articles of faith are as good Evangelical Lutheran as one could wish them to be; in a word, the doctrines of the English Established Church are more closely allied to ours than those of any other denomination in the wide world. We, therefore, have always studied to live in harmony with them.[22]

The first real constitution of the Mother Synod of the Lutheran Church in America did not appear until

prayer, then turned to the children and made a simple and easily understood address about pious children of the Old and New Testaments, and gave some modern examples which had happened in his time. He was deeply moved, and wept, and afterwards also impressed their duty upon the parents. After this the children were catechised, partly by Dr. Wrangel, partly, also, by me in German; but as Mr. Whitefield was very weak physically, and the crowd in the church became too great, we had to stop, and closed with a selection of Church music. The preachers and other delegates, elders and deacons who yet remained dined in the school-house, where the aged Mr. Tennent presided and refreshed us with edifying discourse." Translation of passage found on pp. 1128–1129 in *Nachrichten von den Vereinigten Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinen in Nord-America, absonderlich in Pensylvanien*, von Johann Ludewig Schulze, and set down in *Documentary History* etc., p. 74. *Cf.* also pp. 104, 1165–66, 1122, in *Nachrichten*.

[22] Quoted by H. E. Jacobs in *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United States*, p. 280; "Letter to Nova Scotia" (Nov 15,

1781.[23] The confessional obligation of the ministry and charges which may be preferred against them were:

> Every minister professes that he holds the Word of God and our Symbolical Books in doctrine and life. . . . [Ch. VI, Sec. 2.]
>
> In complaints brought against ministers the subject of investigation must refer to:
>
> 1. Positive errors opposed to the plain teachings of the Holy Scriptures and our Symbolical Books. . . . [Ch. V, Sec. 22.]

This early period saw also the formation of another Lutheran synod, that known as the New York Ministerium. Muhlenberg's son Frederick had gathered the ministerial brethren of New York into a conference as early as 1773; and from this group came forth, under the leadership of Dr. Kunze (Muhlenberg's son-in-law), in 1786 an organization which was destined to be an important factor in subsequent history. The doctrinal character of this daughter-synod was the same as that of the mother. Some of the ministers belonged to both organizations. Most cordial relations were maintained. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1786 had "*Resolved,* that a dozen bound copies of the printed Church Agende be given to Mr. Kunze to take along for the use of Lutheran preachers in New York

1771), Roth's *Acadie and the Acadians,* pp. 296 ff. Dr. Jacobs thinks that here "the great founder of the Lutheran Church in America was giving away far more than he was conscious of" (p. 280).

[23] Printed in *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821,* pp. 165–176. "The Ministerium of Pennsylvania began without any formal constitution. The pastors present knew one another as pledged to the same faith, and as those who would make the same demands of others. The constitution was to be developed in the life of the synod before it would be reduced to writing."—H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.,* p. 241; *cf.* also *ibid.,* p. 261.

State."[24] This Agenda, which is a revision of the one in use in 1748 and circulated in both synods, clearly reveals the doctrinal attitude, on particular points, of the church in the year before the Patriarch's death.[25] The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is clearly held:

> The Act of Baptism. . . . At the conclusion shall be said this prayer: . . . We thank thee, merciful heavenly Father, with all our heart, that thou hast regenerated this little child (plur.) by means of the water and the holy Spirit, and hast taken up and received thy child as well as thereby transplanted it into thy holy Christian Church.[26]

The doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist is also kept:

> Concerning the Lord's Supper. . . . At the distribution of the Bread, the following words shall be employed: Take and eat, this is the true Body of your Lord Jesus Christ, given unto death for you; may this strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto everlasting life, Amen.
>
> At the distribution of the Wine: Take and drink, this is the true Blood of your Saviour Jesus Christ, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, may this strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto everlasting life. Amen.[27]

Conditional absolution was publicly pronounced by the officiating minister at the service preparatory to the

[24] The Thirty-ninth Convention of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, 1786, in *Documentary History*, etc., pp. 209–210.

[25] *Kirchen-Agende der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Vereinigten Gemeinen in Nord-America:* Gedrucket bey Melchior Steiner, in der Reesstrasse, 1786. The work of revision was by Dr. J. H. C. Helmuth, President of the Ministerium, and by Dr. J. F. Schmidt, Secretary.

[26] Translated from *ibid.*, pp. 25–26. The section on baptism agrees, nearly word for word, with the Agenda of 1748: see note on Chapter II in the Printed Agenda of 1748 in *Documentary History*, etc., p. 15.

[27] Translated from *Kirchen-Agende der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Vereinigten Gemeinen in Nord-America*, p. 38.

celebration of the Lord's Supper. The names of those who had previously reported to the pastor their desire to commune were publicly read. After public confession and penitence the absolution was pronounced:

Upon this confession of sins which you have now made, I, a servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, hereby declare to all those who are truly penitent and heartily believe in Christ and are sincerely resolved in heart to amend their lives and daily to grow more devout, to them I declare the forgiveness of all their sins; in the Name of God the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.[28]

Luther's Catechism was the text-book of religious instruction during this period. Before the children were confirmed and received into church-membership the following questions were put to them in a public service:

(a) Do you heartily renounce in the presence of God and this entire assembled congregation, the Devil and all his creatures? Ans. Yes, we renounce.

(b) Do you heartily believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even as is set before you in the Confession of Faith of your Catechism? Answer: Yes, we believe.

(c) Is it truly your intent, now in a solemn manner, to renew your baptismal covenant and to turn away from the kingdom of Satan, the world and the domain of sin to the fellowship of God and to the blessed liberty of the true followers of Jesus? Answer: Yes, it is truly our intent.

(d) Do you desire to remain faithful to the acknowledged and solemnly confessed truth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and especially to the lofty confession of Jesus Christ, even unto death? Answer: Yes, we desire to remain faithful even unto death.[29]

Soon after the passing of Father Muhlenberg the Lutheran Church in America passes into a period

[28] Translated from *ibid.*, p. 32.

[29] Translated from the "Confirmations-Formal" in *ibid.*, p. 55.

marked by confessional laxity, open fraternity, and a spirit of independent thinking which finds expression among conspicuous leaders in noticeable departures from doctrines set forth in the historic confessions. By "confessional laxity" is here meant that freedom from conformity to the doctrinal tenets of the historic Lutheran symbols which had not been characteristic of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century Lutheran theologians and which was not to characterize a large group in the Lutheran Church in America after 1867. By "open fraternity" is here meant the spirit of fraternizing with other Protestant communions, not characteristic of the earlier or later periods. And by the "spirit of independent thinking" is meant that attitude of free inquiry, in contradistinction to mere acceptance of the statements contained in the historic symbols.

Muhlenberg's sympathy with the Anglican Church found a fuller expression in his eldest son, who was ordained first in 1768 by the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and four years later by the Episcopal Bishop of London, after having subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles. This was Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of Revolutionary War fame. Called as a Lutheran minister to Woodstock, Virginia, he went abroad to receive Episcopal ordination. The occasion of his going to London to be thus reordained was to receive recognition as a minister in Virginia according to existing requirements of the law of that colony. At the call to arms in 1776 he exchanged his ministerial gown at the close of a dramatic service for a colonel's uniform. He became one of Washington's most

trusted generals, vice-president of the State of Pennsylvania, member of the House of Representatives of that State, and subsequently United States senator. During his political activity he remained one of the most prominent and active Lutheran laymen and was at one time president of the corporation of the German Lutheran congregation in Philadelphia and one of the founders of St. John's English Lutheran Church of that city. The following statement written by him in 1804 shows that he was not conscious of any inconsistency in his intimate relationship to both the Episcopal and Lutheran churches. It is a plea to his brethren to remain loyal members of the church of their fathers:

Brethren, we have been born, baptized, and brought up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Many of us at our confirmation made a solemn vow before God and the Church that we would abide faithful to the doctrines of our Church, both in life and in death. In the doctrines of our Church we have our joy—our highest joy. We treasure them as higher and more precious than all else, since, in our opinion, they agree most with the doctrines of "The Faithful and True Witness," our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We have no higher wish than that we, and our children, and our children's children, and all our descendants, may abide steadfast in this doctrine. . . . We wish, therefore, that the preacher who is to teach in the English language, should be received by unanimous agreement, should conduct himself in a fraternal way towards the other ministers, labor with them in unity and love, and never teach otherwise than *according to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession* and our *other Symbolical* Books, as has hitherto been the case.[30]

[30] E. E. Sibole, D.D., *Centennial—A Brief Narrative of Events in the First Hundred Years of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Saint John's Church, Philadelphia 1806–1906*, pp. 11, 14. The entire circular letter (of which the above is an extract) written by Peter Muhlenberg to the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Philadelphia, March 14, 1804, is given on pp. 11–18 in *ibid.*

Dr. C. Emmanuel Schultze, prominent in the Pennsylvania Ministerium, a younger contemporary and son-in-law of the Patriarch, wrote in 1797:

> There is not a great difference in point of doctrine in all the Protestant churches. . . . With the Church of England, however, the Lutherans have and ever had a closer connection than with others, owing to a more perfect similarity in church government, festival days, ceremonies, and even some particulars in doctrine. The Episcopalian Church, indeed, does not call itself after Luther's name; but even the church called the Lutheran has not that name by legal and public sanctions. In public acts it is called the Evangelical Church. . . . The Thirty-nine Articles fully agree with the Augustan [sic] Confession, and every Lutheran can subscribe them.[31]

The period under discussion is characterized by a general leveling-down process, with the emphasis placed upon agreement and the disregard of doctrinal differences.[32] Nowhere is this more conspicuous in the Lutheran Church than in the Mother Synod of this period. In 1792 the Pennsylvania Ministerium, founded and nursed by the Patriarch, revised its constitution, leaving out not only any reference to the historic Lutheran symbols but also any mention of the Augsburg Confession.[33] Three ranks of pastors are recognized: catechist, licensed candidate, and ordained minister. The catechist

> is to preach the Word of God in purity . . . must . . . have acquired a systematic knowledge of Christian doctrines and ethics

[31] Preface to *Six Sermons of Lawrence V. Buskerk*, Vol. I, p. 5, and quoted by H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

[32] Dr. H. E. Jacobs calls this the period of "Deterioration", p. 307, *op. cit.* Professor A. R. Wentz presents an illuminating discussion of the *Zeitgeist* in America during this same period. *Cf.* Chap. VIII, *The Lutheran Church in American History.*

[33] The revised constitution is printed in full in *Documentary History*, etc., pp. 248–259.

. . . and above all a practical knowledge of experimental religion.[34]

The licensed candidate

is to preach the Word of God in its purity according to the law and the gospel.[35]

This constitution, however, with its disregard to explicit confessional statement, is not to be considered as a wholesale repudiation of the Lutheran genius; for the catechism of Luther and the synodical liturgy were still in public use.[36] It would appear that the doors of fraternity with all of the other Protestant denominations were thrown wide open in such a position. But such was not the case. The same convention that adopted a constitution with such confessional laxity moved at the same time in the direction of a narrower particularism. The word "German" was introduced into the official name of the synod, the result of which in time alienated the English-speaking element of the church and courted the fellowship of German-speaking bodies, regardless of inherited confessional differences.[37] The direction now taken is unmistakably

[34] *Documentary History*, Chap. V, Art. III, Sec. 3, 10, p. 252.

[35] *Op. cit.*, Art. II, Chap. V, Sec. 3, p. 251. Nothing further is stated as to requirements for the rank of ordained minister.

[36] The president of the Ministerium is required, by this constitution, to present to "every newly received minister, candidate or catechist a copy of our liturgy, provided he have none."—*Op. cit.*, Chap. VII, Sec. 7, p. 257.

[37] Thirteen years after the adoption of this constitution, *i. e.*, at the Fifty-eighth Convention in 1805, the following resolution was unanimously adopted and added as a supplement to the constitution: "That the present Lutheran Ministerium in Pennsylvania and the adjacent States must remain a German-speaking Ministerium, and that no regulation can be adopted, which would necessitate the use of another language besides the German in its Synodical Meetings and business." —*Documentary History*, etc., p. 353. (This Mother Synod retained the word "German" in its title for one hundred years.) Bitter controversy,

away from that given by the Patriarch. Fellowship with the German Reformed [38] grew out of a language kinship with a view to combat the use of English in religious exercises. Indifference toward religion, shallowness, and frivolity were associated with the use of English as over against the German, the vehicle of sound piety and religious fervor! Open fraternity became realized in union churches, in the circulation among the Reformed and Moravian brethren of the *Evangelisches Magazin,* established by the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1811,[39] in coöperative efforts in educational work,[40] and in the use of a common German hymn-book.[41]

amazing statements, court trials, with the exodus of thousands of English-speaking Lutherans into the Episcopal and other Protestant denominations, followed in the wake of this turn in the constitution toward particularism. See account given by H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 327–331.

[38] "Among the people the saying was current that the sole distinction between the churches was that the Lutherans began the Lord's Prayer with *Vater unser,* and the Reformed with *Unser Vater.*"—H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 321. "It must be confessed that many ministers of the Reformed and Lutheran churches favored the organic union of these two bodies, not because they had reached a proper doctrinal basis for such union, but because they knew little and cared less about the questions at issue between them."—J. H. Dubbs, D.D., *Historic Manual of the Reformed Church in the United States,* p. 265.

[39] See Minutes of the Sixty-fourth Convention, 1811, in *Documentary History,* etc., p. 428; also succeeding convention reports.

[40] First in Franklin College at Lancaster, Pa., and in a revived interest in 1818 to join hands in sustaining a theological seminary. See Minutes of Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania: Seventy-first Convention, 1818, in *Documentary History,* etc., p. 513 ff., and succeeding minutes.

[41] "A very interesting indication of the current tendency was the publication, in 1817, of the *Gemeinschaftliches Gesangbuch* as a substitute for the hymn-book prepared in 1787 by Muhlenberg, Kunze, and Helmuth. It was intended for the use of both the Lutheran and the Reformed, was recommended by the synods of both churches in Pennsylvania . . ." H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–324.

The New York Ministerium, on the other hand, adopting the main features of the revised constitution of the Mother Synod in 1797, developed the spirit of confessional laxity, current in this period, in another direction. The character of this body took on the imprint of two conspicuous leaders, Dr. J. C. Kunze, presiding officer of the Ministerium until his death in 1807, and Dr. F. H. Quitman, his successor in the office for twenty-one years.

Dr. Kunze carried on Muhlenberg's program of adapting the Lutheran Church to meet the needs of the native-born in America. Under his influence and direction, the English language gained the ascendancy until it was finally recognized, in 1807, as the official language of the synod. He also inherited Muhlenberg's high regard for the Anglican Church. The synod under his leadership in 1797 adopted the following policy:

> That on account of an intimate relation subsisting between the English Episcopalian and Lutheran churches, the identity of their doctrine and the near approach of their church discipline, this consistory will never acknowledge a newly erected Lutheran church in places where the members may partake of the services of the said English Episcopal Church.[42]

[42] Quoted by H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 318. The same historian sets down the reaction of the Episcopal Church to the Lutheran spirit of fraternity, the same year: "The records of the convention of the Episcopal Church of the same year show that negotiations were actually in progress for a union. 'In 1797 the Rev. Thomas Ellison, Rector of St. Peter's, Albany, communicated to the convention the interesting intelligence that some Lutheran clergymen had, in the name and on behalf of the consistory of the Lutheran Church in the State of New York, intimated to him a desire to have it proposed to this convention that their church might be united with the Protestant Episcopal Church in this State, and that their ministers might receive Episcopal ordination.' It was referred to a committee with Bishop Moore as chairman, but fell through."—*Ibid.*, p. 319.

The influence of the new school of professors at Halle introduced by the pioneer in the use of critical and historical methods of Bible study and church history, Johann Semler, found expression on this side of the Atlantic in the person of Dr. F. H. Quitman. The second president of the New York Ministerium, a graduate of Halle and doctor of divinity of Harvard, was frankly an exponent in the American Lutheran Church of the movement known, historically, as "rationalism". He represents the spirit of independent thinking of this period which departs boldly from the doctrines set forth in the historic confessions. His *Evangelical Catechism,* published "with consent and approbation of the Synod" in 1814, has no relation with the historic catechism of Luther but is an entirely new departure, both as to form and doctrinal content.[43] Doctrines are set forth on the basis of their rationality.[44] Scripture passages are employed only as they can be made to conform to this test. Inherited doctrines which

[43] The influence of his theological preceptor is apparent. Semler had openly declared that the symbolical books of the church contained doctrinal views no longer requiring subscription and that there were matters in Luther's catechism which were ill-adapted to public instruction. *Cf.* J. W. Richard, *The Confessional History of the Lutheran Church,* pp. 568–569.

[44] "3. Q. *Can any rational belief take place without a sure foundation?*

"A. No, all unwarranted belief is superstition.

"4. Q. *Which are the grounds, that ought to constitute the basis of rational belief?*

"A. Either natural perception and experience; or the authority of competent witnesses; or finally, unquestionable arguments of reason."

Introductory Questions and Answers to Part I, "The Articles of the Christian Belief," p. 6 in *Evangelical Catechism: Or, a short Exposition of the Principal Doctrines and Precepts of the Christian Religion, for the Use of the Churches belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York,* F. H. Quitman, D.D.

seem irrational are dropped in favor of new interpretations. Of particular interest are the doctrines set forth on the sacraments:

1. Q. *What is a Sacrament?*

A. A Sacrament is a sacred rite, instituted by Christ himself, with a view to improve his followers in faith and holiness, and to confirm the promises of the gospel to all those, that make a proper use of it. . . .

4. Q. *For what purpose did Jesus ordain this sacrament* [baptism]?

A. To initiate those into his church, who should accept his doctrine.

5. Q. *Why has Jesus prescribed that water should be employed in this religious rite?*

A. To signify, that in the same manner, as water cleanses our bodies; so we find in communion with Christ, in all that he has effected for the good of mankind, and is still operating by his spirit and doctrine, whatever is necessary to purify our souls, whatever can afford us comfort and ease, and render us perfectly happy.[45]

6. Q. *What engagement do those make, who, by this religious rite, are received into the Christian church?*

A. They engage to purify themselves from all uncleanness of the flesh and the spirit, and to accomplish their sanctification in the fear of the Lord.

7. Q. *What has God promised to those, that comply with this engagement?*

A. His grace, pardon of sin, and the assistance of his holy spirit [spelled sic].

8. Q. *Is it proper that infants and children should be baptized?*

A. There is no declaration in the gospel, by which infants and children are excluded from this privilege.

9. Q. *But can you produce some presumptive arguments in favor of infant baptism?*

A. Since our Saviour has declared that children, and those that are of a childlike disposition, are the most proper subjects of his kingdom, he appears, at the same time, to intimate, that parents are obliged to qualify them by the baptismal rite for this exalted character. Mark 10, 14, 15. . . .[46]

[45] F. H. Quitman, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

12. Q. *Has infant baptism any moral tendency?*

A. Yes; Parents that offer their children for baptism, manifest a religious sense highly beneficial to their family and offspring, whilst children, that are early made sensible of their allegiance to Christ will be induced to become acquainted with their Lord and benefactor. . . .[47]

18. Q. *Who receives this sacrament worthily* [Lord's Supper]?

A. Those who fulfil the purpose for which it was intended.

19. Q. *Which is this purpose?*

A. It is plainly expressed in the words: Do this in remembrance of me.

20. Q. *What does this expression imply?*

A. That in that solemn ordinance, we ought to direct our whole attention to our Saviour, and to what he has done, and suffered for our sake, meditating on his holy doctrine, his blameless and beneficent life, his magnanimous sufferings, and meritorious death. . . .[48]

24. Q. *What profit does the worthy communicant derive from this sacrament?*

A. He thereby strengthens his attachment to his Lord and Saviour, and his affection to his fellow-men; excites himself to new resolutions of holiness; increases his inclination and sense of his duty to promote the cause of Christ; sets a good example to those around; and renews his impressions of the saving and comfortable doctrine of the death, and resurrection of Christ.[49]

The doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the real presence are plainly not taught. Regeneration is presented as a "figure" employed by Jesus and his apostles representing "the great change, which is required of those, whom they invited to accept of the gospel." [50] In the Liturgy prepared by Dr. Quitman for the synod the same year, baptism is declared as an "ordinance . . . provided for preserving his [Christ's] church and for maintaining among us a sense of the

[47] F. H. Quitman, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

holiness and regenerating influence of his doctrine."[51]

The general viewpoint of this conspicuous and influential leader in the American Lutheran Church is expressed in his own words: "Freedom of inquiry, is in my opinion, the birthright of the Protestant Church."[52] "It has been my incessant endeavor . . . to help ["those that were entrusted to my care"] to the enjoyment of rational liberty."[53] Referring to the development of Lutheran doctrines he had this to say:

> The friends of Luther ventured even in his life time to differ from him, in some doctrinal points. And as the great reformer was silent to these improvements by his friends; it appears as well from this circumstance, as from many expressions, contained in the works, which were published by him in the later part of his life, that he approved of these emendations. Thus the dogmas of the entire moral incapacity of man, and of the absolute or unconditional divine decrees, which most of the reformers had imbibed in the school of Augustine bishop of Hyppo in Africa, were very early discarded from the list of the creed of the Lutherans, and the more rational and scriptural doctrines of free agency and universal grace substituted in their place. The opposition, which, on this account, they met, especially from the dissenting Protestant parties, induced them to apply with particular care, to the study of the holy scriptures, and the history of the christian church, that from the former they might be supplied with weapons to refute these adversaries, and enabled by the latter to trace the source and progress of the corruptions which had crept into the christian church. Thus incessantly employed in these difficult pursuits, they broke gradually

[51] *A Collection of Hymns and a Liturgy for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches; To Which are Added Prayers for Families and Individuals.* Published by order of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York: pp. 47–48 in Sec. "A Liturgy, &c."

[52] Preface, p. vi, of *A Treatise on Magic; or, On the Intercourse Between Spirits and Men, with Annotations, F. H. Quitman, Professor of Divinity, President of the Lutheran Clergy in the State of New York, and Minister of the Gospel in Rhinebeck, &c.*

[53] *Ibid.*, p. iii.

through the perplexing intricacies of scholastic sophistry, and gave free course to the pure light of the gospel. This spirit of liberty, which is the spirit of Christ, has been transmitted by the fathers of the church to their descendants, of which the last century affords a conspicuous proof. . . . The names of Baumgarten, Crusius, Bengal, Wolff, Ernesti, Semler, Teller, Jerusalem, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Rosenmuller, Doedalein, Koppe, Herder, Niemeier, Storr, Hetzel and many others, will be remembered with gratitude by every friend of the Bible.[54]

Another catechism, similar in spirit to Dr. Quitman's, published as early as the year of Muhlenberg's death (1787) and in considerable use in the South, was that from the hand of Professor John Caspar Velthusen. It circulated under the title, *Helmstaedtischer Katechismus oder Christlicher Religionsunterricht nach Anleitung der Heiligen Schrift,*[55] although it became known by a shorter title, the *North Carolina Catechism.*[56] It reflects the spirit of independent thinking characteristic of the period, and reveals the same doctrinal freedom which was to find expression among the Lutheran clergy and churches in the South. Two years after the revision of the constitution in the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the Lutheran ministers in North Carolina ordained a candidate with the pledge to "ye Rules, ordinances, and customs of ye Christian Society, called ye Protestant Episcopal Church in America."[57]

[54] F. H. Quitman, D.D., "Sketch of the History of Religion", in *Evangelical Catechism:* &c., pp. 174–175.

[55] M. Reu, D.D., *Catechetics, or Theory and Practise of Religious Instruction,* pp. 203–204.

[56] A. R. Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History,* pp. 97–98.

[57] *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina,* p. 339. "Under this pledge, Mr. Miller [by name] was pastor of Lutheran congregations for twenty-seven years."—H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.,* p. 319.

In 1803 the Mother Synod of the South was organized. The protocol refers to this meeting as "the yearly meeting of the Synod of the Lutheran and Protestant Episcopal Church, from nine counties of North Carolina." [58] No reference, not even by implication, is made in the first constitution to the Augsburg Confession or the Lutheran Symbols.[59] Not even the title "Lutheran" occurs. Ordination requirements were:

> No one shall be allowed to preach in our Churches who does not furnish satisfactory written evidence, from the congregation in the midst of which he lives, that he leads an irreproachable life.
>
> No one also shall be ordained to the ministry until the ministers who examine him are fully satisfied that he has a sufficient and satisfactory acquaintance with the New Testament in the Greek language, his faith (doctrines of the Church) and the Latin language, unless the Synod deems it necessary to make an exception in the case of a candidate who displays talents in another direction, and in such a case the whole or a part of the above rule may be dispensed with. . . .[60]

At the second convention of this synod, however, it was "*Resolved,* That the twenty-one Articles of the Augsburg Confession be published for the benefit of the Church." [61] This confession, plainly, was not made binding. Gottlieb Schober and his Moravian congregation were welcomed into fellowship of the synod in 1810 without any strictures.[62] Schober became an in-

[58] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina—From 1803–1826, Twenty-three Conventions.* Translated from the German Protocol—Rev. F. W. E. Peschau, D.D., p. 4.

[59] *Ibid.* The Constitution of 1803, printed in full on pp. 4–6.

[60] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina—From 1803–1826, Twenty-three Conventions.* Translated from the German Protocol—Rev. F. W. E. Peschau, D.D., Art. IV, pp. 4–5.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 10. At the same convention it was "*Resolved,* That our ministers have three days preaching, and, to take part in which, the

fluential leader. "In answer to the question, Which catechism should be the basis of instruction? it was unanimously resolved that Luther's Smaller Catechism must ever be the basis of catechetical instruction; and the catechism of Ambrosius Henkel, explaining Luther's, can be used, but this is left to each pastor to do as he pleases."[63] The synod was not disposed to adopt the detailed system in exposition of Luther's Catechism as set forth by Paul Henkel, one of their number.[64] The *Gemeinschaftliches Gesangbuch*[65] and Schober's *History of the Lutheran Reformation and Lutheran Church,* containing an exposition of the Augsburg Confession,[66] were indorsed by the synod in 1817.[67] Pastor Schober, as secretary of the North

pastors of the Moravian Churches, and of the German and English Reformed Churches, are welcome."—*Ibid.*, p. 11.

[63] Minutes of the Ninth Convention, 1812.—*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[64] Paul Henkel, *The Christian Catechism, Composed for the Instruction of Youth in the Knowledge of the Christian Religion. Together with Morning & Evening Hymns, Prayers, &c.* 2d ed. The Catechism speaks of baptism as a "seal of covenant," "the seal of the promise of eternal life," "the only rite, by which persons are made members of the christian church." The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not mentioned [see pp. 64–72 in *A short and simple Explanation of the Five Chief Heads of the Christian Doctrine,* Luther's Catechism explained]. This Catechism speaks of the Lord's Supper: "By eating this blessed bread and drinking this blessed cup we have communion with the body and the blood of Christ"—with the further explanation: "the effects of Christ's body crucified, and his blood shed for us, are communicated to us by partaking of this sacrament" [pp. 76–77, *ibid.*]. This Catechism was later recommended.

[65] *Ante,* p. 23, foot-note 41.

[66] Published at Baltimore, 1818. "In a book prepared to celebrate the tercentenary of the Reformation in 1817, Pastor Schober, one of the leaders of the synod, explained the articles of the Augsburg Confession in a Reformed sense and declared that among all the denominations of 'those who worship Jesus as God there is nothing to prevent a hearty union".—A. R. Wentz, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[67] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina—*

Carolina Synod, carried on a controversy with the Pennsylvania Synod in regard to the question "whether any one has the right to administer the Holy Communion without the laying on of hands or ordination." [68] This controversy, carried on in a peaceful way, brought Schober to state explicitly his own personal regard for the Augsburg Confession, in a resolution offered before the North Carolina Synod in 1816:

> That all present candidates, after they have passed the examination, shall be delegated their full-authority as above stated in the presence of the assembled congregation first of all after they have promised with a public "Yes" to observe that which the Bible and the Augsburg Confession demands of a teacher, and that in conformity with the purport of their delegated authority they shall receive a blessing by the laying on of hands in the Name of the Church.[69]

The period, then, from 1742 to 1818, the Patriarchal period in the history of the American Lutheran Church, may be characterized as follows: It begins, through the influence of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and his associates, with a confessionalism of the type of the school of pietists over which Spener and Francke had presided. This type, while recognizing the principles of the historic Lutheran confessions, did not hold to them in a rigid and scholastic fashion but placed an emphasis on the practical application of those doc-

From 1803–1826, Twenty-three Conventions, Rev. F. W. E. Peschau, D.D., pp. 32, 34.

[68] *Documentary History,* etc. See Sixty-seventh Convention, 1814, p. 471.

[69] Translated from *Bericht der Berrichtungen, während des Synode des Lutherische Ministeriums, gehalten im Staat Nord Carolina, im Jahr unsers Herrn, 1816,* p. 11.

trines which were productive of piety and practical Christianity. The development in the American Lutheran Church then follows in a gradual disregard for any inherited confessional distinctions and in courting in a more conspicuous way an open fellowship with other Protestant communions. The scholastic type of Lutheran orthodoxy which prevailed in the later sixteenth and during the seventeenth centuries in Germany was not characteristic of the American Lutheran Church which had been planted by Muhlenberg. Notable exceptions from the inherited doctrines contained in the Lutheran symbols were made by men prominent in the affairs of the church during this period.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

The year 1818 is epochal in American Lutheran Church history. In this year a movement was definitely launched, looking to the establishment of the synods into a more intimate fellowship and union. Desire for such a union had found expression here and there within the scattered Lutheran conferences,[1] but nothing definite had come, until the Mother Synod in Pennsylvania at the seventy-first convention, in 1818

Resolved, Finally, that the Synod thinks it were desirable if the various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States were to stand in some way or another in closer connection with each other, and that the venerable Ministerium be charged to consider this matter, to prepare a plan for a closer union if the venerable Ministerium deem it advisable, and to see to it that this union, if it be desirable, be brought about, if possible.[2]

This movement toward a larger Lutheran organization was not the result of the breaking up of the spirit of confessional laxity, open fraternity, and independ-

[1] Seven years before, *i. e.,* in 1811, "Revs. Storch and Shober introduced and advocated the opening of a correspondence with the Pennsylvania Synod, in accordance with the warmly expressed wishes for a closer union with these brethren of our common faith."—*Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina. From 1803–1826, Twenty-three Conventions.* Translated from the German Protocol—Rev. F. W. E. Peschau, D.D., p. 15.

[2] *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States.—Proceedings of the Annual Conventions from 1748 to 1821,* p. 517.

ent thinking characteristic of the post-Muhlenberg development; nor was it the beginning of a more distinctive Lutheran consciousness. It was rather "a way out" of the threatening disruption of the synods into smaller and separate district bodies. America, after the Revolutionary War, had begun to extend her borders. Lutheran immigrants were no longer satisfied to be confined to the colonial settlements of their pioneer fathers, but were attracted to the more promising fields toward the west and south. The Pennsylvania Ministerium sensed its situation. The ministers in Ohio, in West Pennsylvania, in Maryland and Virginia, were seeking independent organizations, necessary to the development of their several growing districts. The Ohio group already in 1812 had perfected their own conference.[3] The synod of North Carolina, too, sensed the situation in its own territory and responded favorably.

The leading clergymen whose names appear in connection with important committees of the Pennsylvania Ministerium preparing the union were George Lochmann, J. G. Schmucker, Christian Endress, and Daniel Kurtz.[4] Letters from Pastor Gottlieb Schober of North Carolina Synod and Dr. Quitman of New York Ministerium are recorded in the minutes as also expressing "the desire for a closer union of the Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States."[5] The names of these men, all of them leaders, are of importance in throwing light upon the general doctrinal

[3] Formally organized themselves into a synod in 1818.

[4] *Documentary History*, etc. See Minutes of Synod 1818–1820, pp. 509–568.

[5] *Documentary History*, etc., Seventy-second Convention, 1819, p. 528.

stamp put upon the General Synod in its inception.

The proposed plan (*Plan Entwurf*) for a Central Union (*Zu einer Central-Verbindung*) of the Lutheran Church in the United States agreed upon in Baltimore in 1819 by the committee from Pennsylvania Ministerium and by Pastor Schober of North Carolina Synod, contains the following significant information:

Whereas, under the guidance of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has spread itself over the greater part of the United States of North America . . . inasmuch as the number of particular Synods or Ministeriums has increased from time to time, on account of the wide extension of said church, and the continued and increasing operation of the same cause will probably lead to the still further increase of the number of Synods and Ministeriums, and this might in the end be the means of bringing about unnecessary and injurious divisions and departures from the end and object hitherto pursued in common by said church; it appears to be the almost universal wish of the existing Synods or Ministeriums, that a fraternal union of the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in these United States may be effected by means of a central organization. . . .[6]

1. This central union . . . to be called The General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of North America. . . .[7]

4. The General Synod has the exclusive right with the concurrence of a majority of the particular Synods to introduce new books for general use in the public church service as well as to make improvements in the Liturgy; but until this be done the hymn-books or collections of hymns now in use, the Small Catechism of Luther, the Agenda already adopted, and such other books as have been adopted by the existing Synods shall continue in public use at pleasure. But the General Synod has no power to make or demand any change whatever in the doctrines (*Glaubens-lehren*) hitherto received among us. . . .[8]

[6] "Plan for a General Synod, Proposed by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, 1819", printed in full in *Documentary History* etc., pp. 541–544.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 542.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 542.

6. Those Synods now existing, as well as those formally recognized or organized by the General Synod, shall never be hindered in the appointing and ordaining of ministers at their own discretion within their own bounds. They also retain forever the privilege of establishing rules and regulations with regard to the internal arrangement and control of the affairs of their own districts; provided, however, that such rules and regulations are not in conflict with these fundamental articles of the general organization. . . .[9]

This document bears the signature of Rev. J. G. Schmucker, president of the Mother Synod in that year, who sent out the first call for a meeting of the General Synod.

"The Deputies from the several Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, appointed to form a Constitution of a General Synod, met in Hagerstown, in the State of Maryland, on Sunday, the 22d day of October, A. D. 1820." [10] Delegates present represented the Synods of Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, and Maryland–Virginia.[11] The expected deputies from Ohio did not appear. The Constitution "unanimously agreed to, and resolved to be laid before the several Synods in the United States for consideration, adoption and confirmation",[12] contains the following basis for union, which reveals its polity and general doctrinal character:

[9] *Documentary History* etc., p. 543.

[10] *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod, in the United States of North America; Together with the Proceedings of the Convention in which it was Formed—Translated from the German*, p. 3. The translation is by Dr. Endress; see *ibid.*, p. 14.

[11] Synod of Maryland-Virginia organized October 11, 1820, *i. e.*, just eleven days before the framing of the Constitution of the General Synod.

[12] *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod*, supra, p. 4.

Jesus Christ, the Supreme Head of His Church, having prescribed no special Regulations concerning Church government, and every sectional portion of the Church being left at full liberty to make such regulations to that effect, as may be most adapted to its situation and circumstances, therefore— Relying upon God our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God, for the promotion of the practice of Brotherly Love, to the furtherance of Christian Concord, to the firm establishment and continuance of the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace— We . . . for ourselves and our successors do adopt the following fundamental articles. . . .[13]

Article III . . . Section II. With regard to all *Books* and *Writings* proposed for common and public use in the church, the General Synod shall act as a joint committee of the special Synods and Ministeriums, after the following manner, viz.

1. The General Synod shall examine all books and writings, such as catechisms, forms of liturgy, collections of hymns, or confessions of faith, proposed by the special Synods for public use, and give their well considered advice, counsel or opinion concerning the same. No Synod, therefore, and no Ministerium, standing in connexion with this General Synod, shall set forth any new book or writing of the kind above mentioned, for public use in the church, without having previously transmitted a full and complete copy thereof to the General Synod, for the purpose of receiving their said advice, counsel or opinion.

2. Whenever the General Synod shall deem it proper or necessary, they may propose to the Special Synods or Ministeriums, new books or writings of the kind mentioned above, for general or special, common or public use. Every proposal of the kind, the several or respective Synods and Ministeriums shall duly consider. . . .

3. But no General Synod can be allowed to possess, or arrogate unto itself, "the power of *prescribing* among us *uniform ceremonies of religion* for every part of the Church;" or to introduce such alterations in matters appertaining to the faith, or to the mode of publishing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (the Son of God, and ground of our faith and hopes) as might in any way tend to burden the consciences of the brethren in Christ. . . .[14]

[13] *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod,* etc., p. 5
[14] *Ibid.,* pp. 7–8.

Section V . . . 1. The General Synod may give advice or opinion, when complaints shall be brought before them, by whole Synods, Ministeriums, Congregations, or individual Ministers, concerning doctrine or discipline. They shall however be extremely careful, that the consciences of the Ministers of the Gospel be not burdened with human inventions, laws or devices, and that no one be oppressed by reason of differences of opinion. . . .[15]

Section VIII. The General Synod shall apply all their powers, their prayers and their means, toward the prevention of schisms among us, and be sedulously and incessantly regardful of the circumstances of the times, and of every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general, of whatever kind or denomination, in order that the blessed opportunities to heal the wounds and schisms already existing in the Church of Christ and to promote general concord and unity, may not pass by neglected and unavailing.[16]

The Constitution of the first united Lutheran Church in America contained no mention, either implicitly or explicitly, of the historical symbolical books of the church, not even the Augsburg Confession. It plainly respected differences of opinion affecting the consciences of its constituency both as to polity and doctrine. It placed on record an earnest desire to welcome any movement looking toward "concord and unity" of Christians "of whatever kind or denomination."

The synods which came together in 1821 under this constitution were: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Maryland–Virginia. The New York Ministerium failed to ratify the proposed agreement. Its failure was not due to objections on doctrinal grounds; for its own constitution, revised in 1816, did not depart essentially from that inherited from the Mother Synod of 1792. Its general doctrinal status in this period is re-

[15] *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod*, etc., p. 9.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

flected in the requirements placed upon its leaders as printed in the constitution of 1816:

Chapter V Sec. 10. If a Minister, ordained by a Bishop, Convention, Presbytery, Association or Council, of another denomination, shall apply for admission into this Ministerium: the Ministerium, being satisfied, on proper examination, that he is a man of piety and unexceptional character, and that he possesses the literary and other qualifications, may receive him into the same, without reordination. . . .[17]

Chapter VI Sec. 5. The intention of the examination [candidate for licensure] here directed shall be, to ascertain, that the person applying for a license is well acquainted with the phraseology, doctrines and books of the holy scriptures, and the evidences of christianity; that he can read the New Testament in the original Greek; that he has a competent knowledge of the Latin tongue, natural and moral philosophy, and church history; and that he has paid attention to composition and pulpit eloquence. It is also declared to be desirable, that every Candidate should be acquainted with the Hebrew and German languages. But the Ministerium may dispense with the knowledge of some of these branches of learning, if the person applying for a license promises to endeavor to acquire it, and is possessed of other qualifications peculiarly fitting him for the Gospel-ministry.[18]

. . . Sec. 18. . . . And we establish it as a fundamental rule of this association, that the person to be ordained shall not be required to make any other engagement than this, that he will faithfully teach, as well as perform all other ministerial duties, and regulate his walk and conversation according to the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as contained in Holy Scripture, and that he will observe this constitution, while he remains a member of this Ministerium.[19] . . .

Chapter VIII Sec. 13 . . . At this meeting [of ordained ministers and candidates, "the Ministerium", strictly so called], also, con-

[17] *The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and Adjacent States and Countries; Revised and Adopted in General Synod* [not referring to the larger body, which was not yet formed], *Sept. 3, 1816*, p. 13.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17. The licentiates, besides preaching, were allowed to administer the sacraments and solemnize marriages.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

sultations may take place respecting the best methods of discharging ministerial functions and promoting the spread of truth and piety, and weighty articles of faith or cases of conscience may receive a friendly discussion; provided always, however, that the first principle of Protestantism, the right of free inquiry, be not infringed, and no attempt be made to erect the Ministerium into an inquisitorial tribunal.[20]

Nowhere in this constitution is found mention of a definite confessional position. Its failure to enter into the General Synod lay in an interpretation of Section 4 in the Ninth Chapter of the revised constitution of 1816, as being adequate to guarantee "all the good effects, which the proposed plan [*Plan Entwurf* of 1818] anticipates" and which "by a general adoption and enforcement" among the Lutheran bodies may promote such a union "with less trouble, danger and expence."[21] Section 4 in Chapter IX of the Constitution read:

If any other Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in the United States shall send a Commissioner or Delegate to attend the annual synod of this Association; such Commissioner or Delegate shall be received and have the right to vote in all its proceedings, as well as in the meetings of the Ministerium, strictly so called . . . provided, that such Ministerium grant equal rights and privileges to a Commissioner deputed from this body.[22]

Union among Lutheran bodies meant for the New York Ministerium merely a friendly exchange of del-

[20] *The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and Adjacent States and Countries;* etc., p. 28.

[21] Report of Committee on *Plan Entwurf* of 1818. See pp. 9–12 in *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York, &c. Convened in St. Peter's Church in the Town of Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, on the Fourth Day of September,* A. D., *1819.* Dr. Quitman, the presiding officer, was not a member of this committee.

[22] *The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and Adjacent States and Countries;* etc., p. 31.

egates. Nothing further was desired by this body.[23]

The spirit of fraternizing with other Protestant communions did not cease with the organization of the General Synod. The same convention of the Pennsylvania Ministerium that proposed a more intimate union with other Lutheran bodies elected a committee, on which, among others, Pastors J. G. Schmucker, George Lochmann, and Christian Endress were to serve, to confer with a committee of the Evangelical Reformed Synod "and devise ways and means for the founding of a joint Institution of Learning, in order to train young men in the future for the ministry." [24] At the same convention, an "Evangelical Roformed preacher", Pastor Hofmeier, preached before the Ministerium.[25] In 1819, the year of the *Plan Entwurf,* the same synod received a verbal report from Dr. Endress, member of the committee, urging the coöperation of the synod with "the Reverend Reformed Synod" in a joint theological seminary. The sum of one hundred dollars was voted toward the support of Franklin College, "provided the Reverend Synod of the Reformed does the same." [26] Friendly interchange of delegates

[23] "*Resolved,* 1. That the plan of a Central Synod, proposed by the Synod of Pennsylvania, cannot be accepted. 2. That an adoption of the fourth section of the 9th chapter in the constitution of this Ministerium be earnestly recommended to the Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States."—*Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York,* etc., . . . *1819,* p. 11. Delegates from this synod attended the meeting of the General Synod, but their body "deemed the proposed plan inexpedient for the present." See Minutes of the New York Ministerium, 1820–22.

[24] Seventy-first Convention, 1818, in *Documentary History,* etc., pp. 516–517.

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 521.

[26] Seventy-second Convention, 1819, in *Documentary History,* etc., p. 537.

continued between the two bodies. In 1821, the year in which the constitution of the General Synod was adopted by the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the latter synod recorded upon its minutes the following expression:

> The committee appointed to examine the Protocol of the reverend Reformed General Synod reported . . . :
> 1. That the delegates to the Reformed Synod appointed by us in last year's meeting, Messrs. Schäfer and Kurtz, were received as advisory members of the Reformed Synod.
> *Resolved,* That this Synod sees in this a proof of the love of those whom we recognize as brethren, and is always ready, as heretofore, to return this favor.[27]

This close fellowship with the Reformed group was the contributing factor that led to the strange turn of events in 1823, when the Mother Synod, after having so carefully nursed the new-born child, so full of promise, suddenly abandoned its policy and withdrew into its own corner of solitude. The church leaders as such were not responsible for this sudden turn of attitude. The situation lay among the church folk, especially in the rural districts, where fellowship with the German Reformed had developed into sacred ties, by reason of union churches, intermarriage, and common language. The new union had a foreign taste, even though the name "Lutheran" should have allayed their fears. But it was not the day which emphasized *confessional* fellowship. Furthermore, a recently published pamphlet had found circulation among the people, written by a certain Carl Gock who declared that the General Synod was a scheme of centralization

[27] Seventy-fourth Convention, 1821, in *Documentary History,* etc., p. 580.

which would take away the rights of the people, tread upon the sacred precincts of their language, and levy unnecessary expenses.[28] The leaders acceded to the demands of the people, believing that it would be a temporary move. But the Mother Synod remained in solitude for thirty years!

Three years after this withdrawal there appears a published volume by a Lutheran minister of the Pennsylvania Synod, with a foreword by another, both of whom had voted against the union with the General Synod in 1821,[29] with this significant title: *The Reunion of Lutherans and Reformed.*[30] This publication

[28] "A country school-teacher, by the name of Carl Gock, published a small volume, in which he excited the prejudices of the country people against the projected General Synod of the Reformed Church. The scheme was declared to be a plan of the ministers to tread the rights of the people underfoot. An entire chapter was devoted to a picture of the despotism exercised by Catholic priests in Europe, and a warning that the formation of a General Synod was attended with such perils. Another chapter dwells on the great evils of theological seminaries, and urges that the money of the people would be better spent in the establishment of elementary schools. All the proceedings of a General Synod, it is urged, will be in English, and the rights of the German will be given away, because the lay delegates will not know what is transpiring. It will be 'an aristocratic spiritual congress.' As to the expenses, 'who is to pay? We farmers. Collections upon collection,' etc. . . . The writer becomes most eloquent in the apostrophe: 'Spirit of Washington, appear from the spirit world, quicken in us the true sense of freedom, in order that the foundation thou hast laid we may defend with our blood.' "—H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 360. See also p. 361.

[29] Seventy-fourth Convention, 1821, in *Documentary History*, etc., p. 582.

[30] The complete title: *Die Wiedervereinigung der Lutheraner und Reformirten.—Ein fassliches Lesebuch für nachdenkende Glieder beider Konfessionen welche über diesen wichtigen Gegenstand gründlichern Unterricht und Aufschluss zu haben wünschen. Begleitet mit einer Abhandlung über das Abendmahl und die Grundsätze der Reformation.* Von Joh. Aug. Probst, Evangelischem Prediger zu Forks ec.—1. Kor.

from the pen of Pastor Probst may be considered the climax of the post-Muhlenberg development of confessional laxity, open fraternity, and free spirit in the Mother Synod. It may be taken as an expression of the prevailing spirit in that Synod, which almost cost the life of the General Synod and a united Lutheran Church in America. It is to be understood also as a reflection of a contemporary movement in Germany which had found a welcome among those in America who held tenaciously to the spirit, language, and ties of the Fatherland. In Germany, fellowship among Lutherans and Reformed had followed in the wake of a let-down of the distinctive confessional doctrines of both churches. The roots which led to the relegation of doctrinal differences to a position of relative unimportance are to be found both in pietism and in rationalism of the preceding century. The Prussian Union of Lutheran and Reformed churches came into being in 1817 under Frederick William III, King of Prussia. It was an endeavor to establish a national church of the two prominent Protestant bodies under a common government and with a common liturgy.[31] That this movement in Germany was finding a sympathetic reception among German Lutherans in this country is nowhere more plainly seen and openly confessed than in this publication of Pastor Probst. The

10, 15. Als mit den Klugen rede ich; richtet ihr, was ich sage.—Mit einer Vorrede von Joh. Conrad Jaeger, Evangelischen Prediger zu Allentown, ec.

[31] See p. 178 in Vol. III of Prof. Kurtz's *Church History* in 3 vols. translated by John Macpherson, M.A. Also pp. 575–578 in *The Confessional History of the Lutheran Church*, by J. W. Richard.

foreword by Pastor Jaeger contains an invective against all historic symbols; a plea for a non-confessional unity, with a special bias toward a closer union between the Lutheran and Reformed bodies on American soil; and a pointing to what was being accomplished to this same end across the sea:

The multitude of believers were of one heart and soul. Acts of the Apostles 4: 32. Thus, my Christian reader! it is written; thus it was in the beginning of Christianity; thus it should still be in the church which the Lord has acquired unto himself with his blood. . . .

Soon after the time of the Apostles its corruption set in. Christians were separated into factions through the fault of teachers, wrangled, quarreled and persecuted one another. Symbols upon symbols were set up by ecclesiastical councils, on the one side declared orthodox and on the other again condemned as damnable error. . . .

Accordingly, as long as the Christian Religion was kept pure and unmixed with all that is human, Christians continued with one heart and one soul, remained as one church of the Lord. One knew nothing of schisms, sects and factions, consequently also nothing of party-means. Believers, disciples, Christians, brethren, they were called. . . .

As long, then, as the different religious factions kept so sacredly their ancestral extraction, which is for all that only human, that no iota and point was allowed to be changed,—how may they become united? . . .

It is solely and singly the business of the preacher to teach Religion and to free it more and more from that which is human. As long as there are these indifferent repeaters of that which is human and ancient and it is all the same to them whether they build upon that foundation of gold, silver and precious stone made permanent by Jesus and his Apostles or upon hay, wood and stubble (1. Cor. 3: 11, 12): it indeed becomes little conducive to a union of Christians of one heart and soul and ever remains unfavorable to such. The reunion is therefore wholly a matter of a Christian and discerning enlightenment of both preachers and people. . . .

There has again been an attempt since 1817 in Germany to

join closer to one another Lutherans and Reformed into one evangelical Christian church, and more has been accomplished in this shorter time than has ever been done within 300 years. But what was it that was so propitious to this noble work? Is it not the present discerning Christian enlightenment in that country? Only this, alone, has brought hearts nearer to one another, and human understanding in spite of all haters of reason and all wild cries of the narrow-minded has so been illuminated that it is becoming more and more capable of discerning the true from the false in religion, the good from the bad, the divine from the mere human. . . .

The Sectarian spirit of the church (accepted for centuries and upon which acceptance properly speaking it depends in religion) which has been an impediment, more and more is disappearing among Lutherans and Reformed; even if there are here and there a few enemies to enlightenment who have a mind to keep it still alive. Genuine theologians are getting away more and more from the old vexatious school-quarrels and the dull, lifeless, formal theology, upon which many noble powers of the human spirit were unprofitably wasted, and the good things of Religion were immensely more harmed when made use of. The gratifying hope of every genuine Christian friend is more and more being approximated in our enlightened and tolerant age, that the long separated flock will gradually become united under their one Shepherd, Jesus, and the heart-exalting declaration of His will come to pass: Joh. 10: 16. There shall be one Shepherd and one flock. . . .

Attempts to join parties of the Christian Religion closer with one another, and when it is possible completely, are therefore by all means not to be scorned or hindered; and even if they do not work immediately nevertheless a moment may come when they may work doubly. Even here in our Fatherland the wish has been repeated already in our mutual synods for a reunion of Lutherans and Reformed. . . .

This indeed is the first work of its sort in our Fatherland:[32] once more it is to be confidently expected that every thoughtful reader of both confessions will find therein a variety of instruction and elucidation upon this aforesaid highly important subject.[33]

[32] Referring to Pastor Probst's publication.

[33] Translated Extracts from "Vorwort" von Joh. Conrad Jaeger, Evangelischem Prediger zu Allentown, ec.—Geschrieben in September,

It does seem strange and inconsistent that the author of these lines should have voted against the union of the Lutheran bodies in America. It is safe to say that the path which he and the Pennsylvania Synod later followed was directly away from that set by the Patriarch of the American Lutheran Church.

The significant utterances of Pastor Probst in this publication, revealing the temper of the times, are especially those which express his antipathy for the historic confessions, now to be considered out of date and obsolete—frankly, containing doctrines contrary to common sense, and, moreover, not even known save among the few learned; his evaluation of these confessions as containing information of mere historical interest; his declaration that the Bible alone is our only and sufficient norm; his insistence that the two characteristic doctrines of the Reformed and the Lutherans, unconditional election and bodily presence, are now given up; and, finally, the more scriptural views (which now prevail), having set aside the interpretations of Calvin and Luther, are bringing the two Protestant groups to a point where obstacles to a union are now removed. He says:

> To Christian people in general it is all the same over what other dogmas the preachers of former days quarreled in their publications. Such writings still can only interest scholars. All the old confessional writings have been brought about through particularly grievous and troublesome circumstances and are likewise with time become obsolete and have only historical value. Those times and circumstances are past; we live in regard to both state and church relations in an entirely different situation. Consequently we are not bound to these, but to the Bible. For, what do the unlearned

1825, pp. v–xix in *Die Wiedervereinigung der Lutheraner und Reformirten*, etc., by Joh. Aug. Probst.

know about the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord, about the Synod of Dort . . . ? But on questions of faith every one is acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude! Upon these do men cling, and the hitherto existing doctrinal differences are vanishing as the night before the sun.[34]

All enlightened and informed preachers are therein mutually agreed that much in the hitherto existing confessional writings, set up as in conformity with the Bible, must be stricken as obsolete and absurd and that one needs to subscribe neither to Luther's, nor Zwingli's, nor Calvin's opinions, human as they are in character, but that there is only One who is our Teacher and Master —Christ; every evangelical Christian is bound neither by Luther's, nor by Calvin's, nor moreover by any one's interpretation of the Word of Christ, but is himself competent to interpret according to his best conscience.[35]

Both churches [Lutheran and Reformed] defend the evangelical liberty of self-examination and have one and the same ground of their faith, the Bible. In conformity with it, both consider the gospel as the only rule of faith and life and are forever opposed to all violence of conscience.[36]

As to that which . . . concerns unconditional election, the doctrine of the [divine] call, the same can enter little into consideration at the Reunion. . . . This dogma has long ago been given up: for there is scarcely to be found one more German Reformed preacher anywhere who believed he must with fervor contend for the same . . . Zwingli's view of this doctrine, more free and in accord with both reason and the Bible, as well as that of the [Lord's] supper, have become current among Lutherans and Reformed, and it has been deemed proper to abandon as well Luther's as Calvin's opinions in respect to both doctrines.[37]

Inasmuch as much more reasonable and scriptural opinions already now prevail among all educated Lutheran and Reformed preachers over the formerly disputable dogmas, why the further separation? [38]

[34] Translated from Joh. Aug. Probst, *Die Wiedervereinigung der Lutheraner und Reformirten*, etc., pp. 76–77.

[35] Translated from *ibid.*, p. 80.

[36] Translated from *ibid.*, p. 79.

[37] Translated from *ibid.*, pp. 73–74.

[38] Translated from *ibid.*, p. 81.

That the spirit of open fraternity with other Protestant communions did not cease with the organization of the General Synod, is further in evidence upon the minutes of the Synod of North Carolina the year following the formal organization of the General Synod. The movement on foot looking to a more intimate union between the Lutherans and Episcopalians in this Mother Synod of the South found formal expression in the year 1821. A committee from the Episcopal Church was present at the convention to lay plans for such a "good understanding".[39] The following plan, submitted by a committee of which Pastor Schober was a member, was accepted:

1. We permit mutual arrangements that are not opposed to the fundamental principles of our respective Churches.
2. The Episcopal Church can, annually, send representatives to our Synod, who are to have the right to a seat as honorary members, and to debate on all propositions, and to vote, except in decisions which affect our Church alone.
3. Our Church has the same privilege to send representatives to their Convention, and they shall have the same rights.
4. All ministers of our Church shall have the right to a seat as honorary members among them, and theirs with us.
5. The representatives of the Episcopal Church assured us that if our students of theology came well recommended, they would be taught free of all expense, in the principles of theology in their Seminary in New Haven.[40]

[39] "Revs. Adam Empia, G. T. Bedell and Duncan Cameron were introduced to us through a letter from Bishop Moore, they having been elected by the English Episcopal Church for the purpose of bringing about a union between us, if possible."—Minutes of the Eighteenth Convention (1821) of the North Carolina Synod, p. 48 in *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, from 1803–1826, Twenty-three Conventions, Translated from the German Protocol*, F. W. E. Peschau.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

An extract of this plan of the North Carolina Synod is found also printed on the Minutes of the General Synod in 1821.[41]

The Synod of Maryland and Virginia, which was organized in 1820 out of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and which became associated with the General Synod from the start, turned its eyes of fraternity to the German Reformed Church. The possible union between Lutherans and Reformed was considered a subject of such importance by this Synod that it was deemed worthy of the serious consideration of the larger body. In 1822

> The subject of a union with the German Reformed Church was introduced and is considered as one of great moment by this Synod, meriting the attention of the General Synod.[42]

Of special interest in this period of the beginnings of the first united Lutheran Church in America into a "General Synod" is the attitude taken by the leaders toward the historic confessions and such doctrines as were later subjects of controversy. A conspicuous example of the continued spirit of free inquiry which, as has been pointed out, characterized the post-Muhlenberg development, is to be found in Rev. Dr. George Lochmann, whose name is associated with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania since 1794, an influential leader, who was the presiding officer of that body when the

[41] *Minutes of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, In the United States, Convened at Fredericktown, Md., Oct. 21, 22, 23, 1821*, p. 12.

[42] *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia at Cumberland (Maryland) for the Year 1822*, p. 10.

movement for a larger Lutheran organization was launched in 1818, and who became the first president of the General Synod in 1821.

Dr. Lochmann published a little book in 1818 entitled *The History, Doctrine and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* containing three parts: (1) "History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church"; (2) "The Doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Containing the Augsburg Confession with Explanatory Notes and Remarks"; and (3) "The Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." [43] The author gives as his reason for presenting this publication that "the history, doctrines and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, are very little known among the English portion of the United States." [44] It is safe to say that, as a characteristic of this period, there was more truth than mere rhetoric in that statement! In Part I, the author points out that in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper there is little difference of interpretation between Luther and Calvin.[45] The doctrines taught by Arminius [46] and by Count Zinzendorf, who revived the Moravian movement in Germany,[47] are Lutheran doctrines. Lutheran doctrine is not identified by this author with the theology of the entire historic symbolical books of the Lutheran Church. The Formula of Con-

[43] Harrisburg, 1818.

[44] Lochmann, *The History, Doctrine and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Preface, p. iii. He adds: " . . . because their [Lutheran] doctrines have hitherto been mostly taught and preached in the German language"—which was certainly true in the Pennsylvania Ministerium.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[46] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

cord is not mentioned.[48] Dr. Lochmann approvingly quotes an author as saying that "the grand and leading doctrine of Lutheranism, is the right of private judgment in matters of religion."[49] In Part II the author points out that the Lutherans early protested against the name "Lutheran" and desired rather to be called "The Evangelical Church."[50] The "several formularies adopted by the church, which contain the principal points of its doctrine . . . have no authority beyond what they derive from the scriptures, whose sense and meaning they are designed to convey; nor are the Lutheran doctors permitted to interpret or explain these books, so as to draw from thence any propositions, that are inconsistent with the express declarations of God."[51] Dr. Lochmann, then, proceeds to the discussion of the Augsburg Confession, of which he says:

> The Augsburg confession contains twenty-eight chapters or articles. Some of them however only point out the errors and abuses, that occasioned their separation from the church of Rome. Presuming that such articles would be of little use to christians of our days, we have contented ourselves with translating and making remarks on such only as are esteemed essential and necessary to salvation.[52]

The Augsburg Confession, then, for him, contains articles that are obsolete, and a modern recension is now proposed. That this should not appear startling, the

[48] The author enumerates the Lutheran Symbolical Books: "The Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the confession, the short and larger Catechism, and the Smalkalden articles."—*Ibid.*, p. 81.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

reader is reminded of the fact that the Lutheran Church "has given up several customs and ceremonies, which were existing at the time of the reformation"; and that Luther himself "was sensible of the defects of the reformation." [53]

The English translation of the Latin and German originals presented by Dr. Lochmann is free rather than exact.[54] The *omissions* made by him in his edition of the Augsburg Confession are: Article I: the definition of "person" in the Trinity, together with the paragraph of condemnation; Article II: the paragraph of condemnation; Article III: mention of the Apostolic Creed and a translation of either the Latin *beatæ* or the German *reinen* descriptive of the Virgin Mary; [55] Article IV: the last sentence which declares that this faith God imputes to us as righteousness; [56] Article V: the paragraph of condemnation; [57] Article VIII: the paragraph of condemnation; Article IX: the paragraph condemning the Anabaptists; Article X (on the Lord's Supper): the disapproval of those who

[53] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 84. The author quotes Luther as saying: "Many things . . . are yet to be made better. We have only made the beginning, and we have retained some customs, for fear of giving offence to weak minds. They that come after us, we hope, will be enabled, by the spirit of God, to do more."

[54] *E. g.*, Article II, where the Latin original has *per baptismum et Spiritum Sanctum* and the German original has *durch die Taufe und heiligen Geist*, Dr. Lochmann has "of *water* and the Holy Ghost". Examples could be multiplied showing that his translation of the Augsburg Confession did not aim at exactness.

[55] The German *die Erbsünde* is preferred to the Latin *pro culpa originis*, as is seen in this translation: "original sin". The Latin requires "original guilt".

[56] "Hanc fidem imputat Deus pro justitia coram ipso." Rom. 3 & 4. "Denn diesen Glauben will Gott für Gerechtigkeit vor ihm halten und zurechnen, wie St. Paulus sagt zu den Röm. am. 3, und 4."

[57] This article follows the German original rather than the Latin.

teach a different doctrine;[58] Article XII: the word "absolution" in the second sentence,[59] and the paragraph condemning the Anabaptists and Novatians; Article XIII;[60] Article XVI: the sentence condemning the Anabaptists; Article XVII: the paragraph condemning the Anabaptists and Jewish doctrines; Article XVIII: the name of Augustine's work[61] and a considerable portion of the last section of the article;[62] Article XIX: the last sentence containing the Scripture passage found in John 8:44; Article XX (considerably abbreviated); Article XXI: the clause referring to war on the Turks; and the entire concluding paragraph on "the Sum of our Doctrine".

Comments on the several articles of this abbreviated historic confession by the first president of the General Synod are significant. The doctrine of the Trinity referred to in Article I frankly "contains something above our comprehension" although not necessarily "contrary to reason".[63] The clause in Article II on Original Sin which says "that this innate disease and inherited sin, is really to be accounted sin, and condemneth all, who are not born again of water and the Holy Ghost",[64] is explained: "If we suffer our

[58] Latin, *improbant secus docentes*, and German, *Derhalben wird auch die Gegenlehre verworfen*, omitted by Dr. Lochmann.

[59] Latin: "Altera est, fides, quæ concipitur ex evangelio [seu absolutione]." German: "und doch daneben glauben an das Evangelium und Absolution." Dr. Lochmann omits mention here of absolution.

[60] Dr. Lochmann follows the German, which does not contain the condemnatory paragraph found in the Latin.

[61] "Hypognosticon" which appears both in the Latin and German originals.

[62] Including the condemnation of the Pelagians which is found in the Latin original and left out in the German with the remark "u.s.w."

[63] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

depraved nature to have the rule over us, it will certainly lead us to ruin and condemnation''.[65] That Dr. Lochmann rejected the doctrine that personal *guilt* is imputed to all since the fall of Adam,[66] is in evidence further in the following statements: *the one,* his own, and *the other,* a more extreme expression from Dr. Kunze, first president of the New York Ministerium:

> The consequences of the fall of Adam were: 1. the moral disease, which we call, in the language of theology, original sin, or innate depravity of nature; and 2. the loss of immortality. Thus far is the sin of Adam imputed to us. We have, in consequence of it, an innate natural depravity, and we are all liable to death—but further, the fall of Adam is not imputed to us.
>
> To derive original sin from the first man's being the federal head or representative of the human race, seems not satisfactory to a mind, inclined to derive or expect only good and perfect things, from the good and perfect Creator. By one man's disobedience, it is true, many were made sinners, but not on account of an imputation of this man's sin, but because by him, sin entered into the world.[67]

The doctrine of Baptism, Article IX in the Augsburg Confession, receives the following comment:

> In baptism we enter into a covenant with God. He promises to be our Father for Christ's sake, and to grant us his Holy Spirit, in order to guide us into the ways of truth and holiness; and we promise to become his dutiful children. As long as we fulfil our part of the contract or covenant, we may be assured that God's promises will stand.[68]

[65] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 87. The author quotes approvingly from "some" interpreters of this clause.

[66] A doctrine suggested in the Latin of the Augsburg Confession of 1530, in the words: "Christus . . . et hostia esset non tantum pro culpa originis, sed etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis." —Art. III.

[67] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Children are to be baptized, among other reasons,

> Because parents have a right to make contracts for their children, to their advantage, as long as such children have not attained the proper use of their reason.[69]

Although he himself plainly did not hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, Dr. Lochmann was willing to concede that this doctrine which has been held by the Lutheran Church may still be useful. Michaelis' view, which pictures regeneration as an act of adoption, is presented:

> Baptism is considered by the Lutheran Church, as the washing of regeneration; thus Paul calls it, Tit. 3. 5. We therefore find that in the primitive church, baptism and regeneration were used as synonimous terms. The Jews, when they baptized heathens, who became proselytes to them, considered them, when baptized, as regenerated, that is, although they were born of heathens, yet after baptism, they were considered, as if they had been born of Jewish parents; this was the received opinion of the word regeneration among the Jews. Thus in christian baptism, although we are by nature born in sin and of sinful parents, yet in baptism God condescends in mercy, for Christ's sake, to adopt us as his children, and to take us under his particular care.[70]

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Article X of the Augsburg Confession, receives the following comment from the author, together with one from Dr. Kunze:

> He [Luther] insisted that, agreeably to the nature of a sacrament, something must be offered and received. Hence arose that expression—true body. He wished to say that there really was a partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the supper.[71]
>
> The Lutherans therefore hold, that the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine; but as sure as the penitent communicant

[69] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

receives the bread and wine, so surely does he receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus—or in other words, the benefits of redemption; that there is therefore an union or communion between the external signs, and the body and blood of Christ. 1 Cor. 10. However, they do not attempt an explanation of the manner of this union. Let it be called, say they, a sacramental union, because there is nothing in the nature of things, that can illustrate it, or that is like it.—*Dr. Kunze's history of the Lutheran church.*[72]

Article XI, "Of Confession and Absolution", receives the following comment:

It was a custom before the reformation, to make confession of sins, in private, to a priest, and to obtain absolution from him. Luther and his colleagues contended, that this custom was not commanded in holy scripture, and that it was only an ordinance of the church, which might be of use, when properly conducted. However, they did not believe, that the absolution by the priest would be of any use, unless the person confessing, was in a truly penitent state; and then, it could not be considered, that the priest could absolve; all that he could do, was to declare to the penitent, the promises of God, concerning the forgiveness of sins, and to pronounce the threatenings of the law of God, to the impenitent, as long as they continued in sin.[73]

At present, this custom is regulated thus, in the Lutheran churches: A day or two before the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to be administered in a congregation, the persons desirous of becoming communicants go to the house of the minister, or to any other appointed place, to give in their names, so that he may have an opportunity to speak to them concerning their spiritual state; and that they also may have an opportunity to disclose their state to him, and ask his advice. The day previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper, all, who wish to become communicants, attend at the church for divine worship. After singing an hymn and praying, a suitable discourse is delivered—the object of which, is to assist the hearers, in an examination of themselves, in order to bring them to a sense of their sinfulness and depravity and to induce them to humble themselves

[72] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–107.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

before the throne of God, to seek forgiveness of sins in the blood of the Redeemer, and to make the solemn resolution to amend their lives. After this discourse, some questions are put to the audience, which are answered in the affirmative. The congregation then kneels—one of them repeats a confession of sins with an audible voice—the minister adds a few ejaculations; and, after all have stood up, he pronounces pardon and absolution to all the truly penitent; but, at the same time, he says to the impenitent, that they cannot hope for the pardon of their sins, until they sincerely turn from their wicked ways to the Lord.

This is all the Lutheran church holds concerning confession and absolution, as may be more fully seen in their liturgy.

The formule [sic] of absolution in the Roman church . . . is absolute—in the Greek church, it is deprecatory—and in the Protestant churches it is declarative.[74]

Article XII, "Of the Use of the Sacraments", is commented on thus:

The Sacraments are designed to preserve and perpetuate the religion of Christ to all future generations, and are necessary to salvation, *for those that can have them.*

Not that our blessed Lord will condemn all heathens or others, who have never heard of his name, for not partaking of the Sacraments, which never came to their knowledge, or that he will condemn innocent children, who die unbaptized; but that all, to whom the knowledge of these institutions is come, and who have it in their power to partake of them, are indispensably obliged to do so.[75] [76]

Dr. Lochmann concludes his book with the following expression on Church Unity:

. . . I cannot help expressing my pleasure, in observing that the different denominations are drawing nearer to each other, and that bigotry is rapidly declining. In some parts of Germany and in

[74] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–110.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[76] Part III, "The Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church", does not come under the special concern of this study.

Prussia, the distinction of Lutheran and Reformed is already done away, and both churches consider themselves as one body. And God grant! that this spirit of union and brotherly love may continue to spread![77]

In 1822 appeared the first edition of a catechism by the same author, which found wide circulation. In it "the leading Principles" of the Lutheran church are presented:

1. That the Holy Scriptures, and not human authority, are the only source from whence we are to draw our religious sentiments, whether they relate to faith or practice.
2. That Christians are accountable to God alone for their religious principles, and that therefore no person should be punished by the civil authority, for his religious principles, as long as he makes no attempt to disturb the peace and order of civil society.
3. That Christ has left on record, no express injunction with respect to the external regulations and form, which is to be observed in his Church. . . . Hence some of the Lutheran Churches have an Episcopalian form of government, as in Denmark, Sweden, &c.; and others have more of a Presbyterian form, as in many parts of Germany, Prussia and America.[78]

This catechism plainly reveals a freedom from a strict regard for the Lutheran confessional doctrines. The reader is informed in the opening paragraph that the proper name of the Lutheran Church is "The Evangelical Church".[79] The catechism is plainly a substitute for Luther's and is an original contribution.[80] Baptismal regeneration is plainly not taught.

[77] Lochmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 161–162.

[78] *Principles of the Christian Religion, in Questions and Answers, Designed for the Instruction of Youth in Evangelical Churches*, Preface, pp. iii–iv.

[79] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. iii.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 29. *E. g.*, "prayer" is added as a "means of grace".

11. *For what purpose did Christ ordain this Sacrament?*

To initiate those into his Church, who should be willing to accept his doctrine—to assure them of the great blessings, which he purchased for mankind; and to show them the necessity of purifying themselves from all uncleanness of the flesh and spirit.[81]

12. *Of what blessings are we assured in baptism; or in other words, what are the benefits obtained in baptism?*

We are assured that God is our kind and merciful Father, and adopts us as children into his family—that Jesus is our Saviour and grants us an interest in his atoning sacrifice—and that the Holy Ghost will purify and sanctify us, if we do not resist his operations.[82]

Children are not to be thought of as condemned, or "of Satan", until after the age of responsibility.

As soon as they imitate the example of Adam and commit sin wilfully and designedly, they lose their privileges and become children of Satan.[83]

Although in his earlier work the author presents the Lutheran confessional view of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, no place is given for this doctrine in his own account of the Eucharist in this Catechism. This Sacrament receives the following explanation:

21. *For what purpose did he institute this Sacrament?*

Not only to put us in mind of his great love to sinners; but also to offer unto us an interest in his sacrifice, and to assure us, that all penitent and believing souls should be partakers of it, as surely as they partook of the consecrated bread and wine.

Bread and wine are the pledges to assure us of our interest in the sacrifice of Christ. . . .[84]

23. *What benefits do we derive from partaking of the Lord's Supper in a penitent manner?*

We really partake of the sacrifice of Christ, and consequently

[81] *Principles of the Christian Religion*, p. 30.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

have forgiveness of sins, life and salvation; we obtain refreshment and strength for our souls; and we become more closely united to our Saviour and his followers.[85]

Dr. Christian Endress, whose name appears among the leaders in the beginnings of the General Synod,[86] wrote a serial article in the first volume of "The Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer", a magazine published monthly by the Synod of Maryland and Virginia. In this article there appear some interesting statements which again reflect the thought of the Lutheran divines in America at this period. He says, for example:

Christ is my master, the Bible my code of religious instruction; in this I shall always be a Lutheran. There is in Luther's works much that I cannot assent to, much in which the Lutheran church has never gone with him.[87]

"A complete set of Luther's works", he adds, "is a rare article in this country". That such a set was costly, he admits, but adds: "Those that were written in the German language might however readily be had." [88] An interest in the study of Luther's theology was on the whole lacking. Dr. Endress had set himself to the study of Luther's view on predestination and was searching for some one who might happen to have Luther's works. "I was at length successful", he says. "In the library of one of my brethren in the

[85] *Principles of the Christian Religion*, p. 34.

[86] *Ante*, p. 35.

[87] *The Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer. Containing Historical, Biographical and Religious Memoirs: With Essays on the Doctrines of Luther: And Practical Remarks and Anecdotes, For the Edification of Pious Persons of all Denominations.*—Edited by a Committee of Clergymen, appointed by the Synod of Maryland and Virginia. September 1826. Vol. I, p. 161.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

ministry, I unexpectedly discovered 'the whole of Dr. Martin Luther's works, written both in the German and Latin languages.' "[89] And he proceeds to describe the unexpected "find". He interprets Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the following manner:

> I will take the liberty to add, that properly speaking, the greater part of Luther's arguments concerning the Lord's Supper were of the *negative,* not the positive kind; . . . So that his opinion on the subject cannot be positively and truly called by any special name; it is not in fact altogether a *positive* opinion. Christ gives his body and blood with the bread and wine, so saith Luther, how he gives it, Luther saith not. The words of Jesus, this is my body, are true, but mysterious; this is Luther's doctrine. . . . Luther's opinion is not consubstantiation . . . Luther *never* did say, that Christ's body is *materially* present in the sacrament. He says that *we* truly and *bodily receive* the body of Christ; this is his strongest expression; . . . "The body of Christ," he often says, "is present *in its power.*" He no where to my knowledge, has said, *in substance;* but rather (confession concerning the Lord's supper, 1528) if they prove much, they prove that Christ is not present *bodily,* which they need not do, for this we *admit.*[90]

The union of the synods into a larger body in 1820, although indorsed by the majority of the then existing bodies, is not to be understood as having had a unanimous support. It has already been pointed out that the New York Ministerium failed to ratify the proposed agreement, by reason of its own ideas of union;[91] and that the Mother Synod of Pennsylvania abandoned its initial policy of such a union soon after the organization was effected, because of the demands

[89] *The Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer,* pp. 162–163.

[90] *Ibid.,* pp. 256 ff. [The page following p. 256 is numbered 265 in the copy consulted—evidently a misprint.]

[91] *Ante,* pp. 39–42.

of the churches for a more preferred alliance with the German Reformed.[92] Neither of these difficulties was occasioned by doctrinal differences. It has also been shown that the doctrinal platforms of those several bodies were broad, closely guarding the rights of individual consciences. The same spirit which characterized the Lutheran Church in America, after 1792, was read into the platform of the new General Synod. There arose, however, in the South, a formal protest against the union, which was due definitely to doctrinal disagreement. A controversy developed and was waged in the Synod of North Carolina, the result of which brought the first secession by reason of differences of doctrine of Lutherans from their brethren and the formation of a new synod.

In 1820, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Tennessee was organized around a definite confessional expression. This event may be taken as the first organized effort to bring the Lutheran Church back to a confessional consciousness since the days of the Patriarch; and it may also be considered as the beginning of the strong wave toward confessionalism which was later to sweep over the American Lutheran Church.

The name of Paul Henkel is intimately associated with the early missionary effort of the Lutheran churches. He was a member of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, coörganizer of two synods, that of North Carolina and the Synod of Ohio and Adjacent States. His headquarters were located at New Market, Virginia. From here emanated the conservative school, commonly called the Henkelites, in the persons of four

[92] *Ante*, p. 43 ff.

sons who carried further the point of view of their father. Paul Henkel's Catechism has already been mentioned.[93] The imprint of his high regard for the inherited doctrines of the Lutheran Church as found in the historic Lutheran expressions became especially stamped upon the Synod of Ohio, where he labored for many years, and, by way of his sons, upon the Synod of Tennessee. These two synods never found their way into a union with the General Synod. This latter body was charged by the Henkels and their followers with having departed from the distinctive features of Lutheranism.

With the minutes of the Synod of North Carolina for 1819, the year in which the proposed General Synod was up for consideration by the Lutheran synods, appears the beginning of the quarrel between the Henkels and that synod. Personal animosities fed the fires of contention. Philip Henkel ordained his brother David and a certain J. E. Bell "under an oak tree" [94] without the sanction of the synod. The body refused to sustain the act, looking upon them as insurgents, intolerant and unchristian separatists. The secretary remarks that "here Satan began the division among us." The president of the synod tried to effect harmony. But the Henkels refused to coöperate further, charging that synod with having departed from the Lutheran doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the true presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist; and courting an alliance with others in a plan

[93] *Ante*, p. 31.

[94] See *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina*, etc., p. 39 ff.

of union which was against the Augsburg Confession. The minutes contain the grievances of the Henkels:

> . . . thus the Messrs. Henkel defended themselves . . . accused us that we taught baptism not as [an act of] regeneration, and that we receive the elements in the [Lord's] supper not as the true body and blood of the Lord; and therefore since the proposed plan ["Plan Entwurf"] for a union of our churches would be against the Augsburg Confession, they could not unite themselves with us. . . .[95]

At this same convention which adopted the *Plan Entwurf,* a communication was received from a Methodist minister asking information from the synod whether or not the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the bodily presence were still held by this Lutheran body.

> A letter to our synod was read from the Rev. James Hill, a Methodist preacher, with the following contents:
>
> ". . . For nearly 13 years that I have spent in this county I have understood that the largest number of your preachers in the county have taught that water-baptism effected regeneration and that the body and blood of Christ were received bodily with the bread and wine in the [Lord's] supper; so that these doctrines which have been taught so generally and have been believed according to the Confession have convinced me that they are the orthodox doctrines of the Lutheran Church.
>
> "But alas, last Monday I discovered, or else I believed to have discovered, that some [members] of your Rev. Synod had other views . . . thus I beg for the opinion of your Synod on the above points." [96]

A committee, consisting of Revs. R. J. Miller and Peter Schmucker, was appointed to answer this communica-

[95] Translated from *Auszug von den Verrichtungen der Teutsch und Englisch Lutherischen Synode für Nord-Carolina und angränzenden Staaten, im Jahr 1820,* p. 6.

[96] Translated from *Auszug von den Verrichtungen der Teutsch und Englisch Lutherischen Synode für Nord-Carolina und angränzenden Staaten, im Jahr 1820,* pp. 13–14.

tion. The committee's reply, which was indorsed by the synod and which appears in full in the minutes of this synod for the same year, is significant:

The following reply was accepted and the secretary commissioned to communicate, after a courteous and friendly preamble, the following reply on our action:

"To the Reverend James Hill.

"In reply to your question whether water-baptism effects regeneration we declare that we do not fully comprehend what you mean by the word 'effect' [*wirken*] since it suffers diverse interpretations; but we do say that baptism is beneficial and that it should be practised as a command of God: but we do not say that all who have been baptized with water are regenerated and have been converted to God so that they are saved without the operation of the holy Ghost—or in other words without faith in Christ.

"With reference to your 2nd question, we do not believe and teach that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is received bodily with the bread and wine in the Lord's supper but that the same is received and enjoyed on the part of true believers spiritually, together with all saving and redemptive blessings of his suffering and death, through faith in Jesus Christ." [97]

David Henkel in a vigorous tirade [98] against the proposed General Synod and the alleged un-Lutheran views held by ministers of the North Carolina Synod, against which he had rebelled, has this to say about the above answer to Hill's query:

The presence of the real body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, is professedly the doctrine of the Lutheran church. But this body of men [North Carolina Synod] do not teach this doctrine

[97] Translated from *ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

[98] *Carolinian Herald of Liberty, Religious and Political; or, a Testimony against attempted measures, which in their nature are calculated to lead to the establishment of Popery among Protestants . . . in an Oration. There are also other subjects inserted in this little Work, highly interesting to the Lutheran community.* David Henkel, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, residing in Lincoln County, North Carolina.

as Luther did, nor according to the Augsburg Confession of Faith; which is not only evident from various testimonies, but also from their answer to Mr. J. Hill. (See their minutes of 1820. . . .) They say there, "We do not believe, nor teach, that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is corporeally received along with bread and wine in the Lord's supper." The word *corporeal,* signifies the having of a body: the corporeal body of Christ, or the body of Christ, having a body! Wonderful expression! There is no body in the universe unless it be corporeal; if it were not, it could not be a body. Even a spiritual body is corporeal—that is, it is a body. Why did this connexion not express themselves grammatically? Why this unpardonable tautology? "We do not receive the body," &c. "corporeally;" or, the body bodily—or, the body as having a body!!! Were there no scholars among them? There certainly were. If the body and blood of Christ are at all received, they must be received corporeally; because there is no body, &c. unless it be corporeal—that is, there can be no body unless it be a body. It is evident that they mean the real body and blood of Christ are not received in the holy Eucharist. This is still plainer from their subsequent expression, when they say, viz: "But the true believer does spiritually receive and partake of the same through faith in Jesus Christ, and all the saving benefits of his death and passion." Agreeably to this, his body and blood are not really present and administered, because they admit no other partaking than a spiritual one by faith. . . .

Luther invariably maintained the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, and refused brotherly fellowship with those who denied it. . . .

Should any one think that Luther was wrong, let him openly declare it, and forsake the Lutheran church . . . is it not a miserable thing, that this connexion of ministers deny Luther's doctrine, and yet endeavor to cover themselves with his cloak?

As it respects myself and my associates, we consider our vows too sacred to break in fellowshipping this connexion, who deny the very doctrine Lutherans vow to maintain. . . .[99]

The same writer warns his "Lutheran brothers and Sisters" against the proposed General Synod:

[99] David Henkel, *Carolinian Herald of Liberty,* etc., pp. 32, 35.

We live in a very critical time—portentous of great events, almost within ken. The prophecies are fulfilling. The great falling away from christianity has rapidly increased in Europe, and progressing in America; it therefore cannot be long before the man of sin (antichrist) will set himself into the temple of God. . . . No wonder, then, when there are many strange revolutions in the church already, to try the faithful. In all probability . . . popery once more shall be revived. . . . General synods, clandestine societies under a good garb, and the worshippers of monarchy and political religion, are so many instruments by which the Dragon may rear his throne of despotism, and once more deluge the world with blood. . . .[100]

Commenting on the doctrinal character in the plan of the General Synod, he observes:

Had the projectors of this plan positively intended that our present creeds and symbolical books should always be retained in use, why was there not a clause inserted to that amount? . . . The Bible is not once mentioned in the plan—posals [sic] for a General Synod! All that is said, is, that none of our creeds should be altered: Thus the Bible itself might be omitted, if it only be not altered. . . . Would they reject Luther's catechism, our present liturgies, hymns, and the Augsburgh confession of faith, and introduce others in lieu of them? I do not know. . . .[101]

[100] David Henkel, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Dramatic passages such as this occur: "Lo! the gorgeous President of the General Synod, at the head of all Lutherans in America; enthroned, a sceptred monarch, gloomy, and peculiar, and unrivaled; forgetting that his predecessor Martin was a poor excommunicated monk: he has delegates for his life-guard, presidents his emissaries, pastors his common people, deacons his servants, candidates and catechists his out-posts, and congregations his footstool. . . . If Luther was now to rise from his grave, and come to America, what would he say at hearing that . . . who called themselves after his name, . . . Lo! what an exotic plant is this! at first germinated in hell, fostered by the old harlot in the garden of Rome; poisoning all that is pure, and destroying all that is lovely; metamorphosed into a maniac demon, in the disguise of religion, is now proposed to be transplanted into the clarified soil of Lutheranism, which fills the agile mind with anticipated horrors of popery revived, even upon the unsullied shores of America."—*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.

Breaking, then, with the Synod of North Carolina and revolting against the proposed union of the synods into a larger body, the Henkels and their followers in the South organized themselves into the Tennessee Synod in 1820. The doctrinal character of this new body took a definite and explicit turn toward a more strict Lutheran confessionalism:

> All doctrines taught by us, both with respect to faith and conduct, and all books for public use in the church, shall be in conformity to the holy Scriptures and the Augsburgh Confession of Faith, as near as possible. Luther's smaller catechism shall be the standard catechism of our church. . . .
>
> All such as desire to become ministers, must solemnly promise to teach agreeably to the word of God, and the Augsburgh Confession of Faith, and the doctrine of our church. Neither can it be suffered, that any minister of our Synod should be connected with the General Synod, if it should ever be established as it has been proposed. . . . No minister of our Synod shall be allowed to take a seat and vote with the connexion . . . of ministers in North-Carolina, until we are convinced that they are united with us, in the evangelical doctrine of the Lutheran church.[102]

[102] The organization meeting of the Tennessee Synod. Rules and Regulations of this synod given in *ibid.*, pp. 42–45.

CHAPTER III

THE LEADERSHIP OF S. S. SCHMUCKER

The history of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America cannot be written without due attention to the name of Samuel Simon Schmucker, son of the pastor who, as president of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, had issued the call to its first convention. First in the rôle of savior of this body in the critical situation of 1823, then as organizer, writer of constitutions, teacher of ministers, and author, S. S. Schmucker held the place of leadership and molded the general doctrinal character of this body in the first quarter of a century of its history.

Educated at the University of Pennsylvania, at Princeton Theological Seminary, and under the tutelage of such men as his own father and Dr. Helmuth, he brought to his ministry that catholic outlook and tolerance which came through personal contact with men of other religious persuasions; that special devotion to pietism which found favor in his own parental home and which flourished at Princeton Theological Seminary;[1] and that acquaintance with the Lutheran con-

[1] A Lutheran biographer (R. W.) writes: "His father, Dr. J. G. Schmucker, was a Pietistic Lutheran of the Spenerian School, and hence sent him to study theology at a Puritanical Seminary."—John G. Morris, *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry*, p. 136.

fessions which came through contact with a venerable leader of the church of an earlier day in the person of Dr. Helmuth. He was easily the best trained man in the American Lutheran Church of that day.[2] And to his training must be added a natural disposition to inquire, to question, and to think problems through for himself, together with the rare gift of combining scholarship with organizing ability.

S. S. Schmucker became identified with the work of the General Synod at its beginning, attending the organization meeting in 1820 as an unordained lay-preacher and three years later plunging into its work with all the talents and means at his disposal. The situation in 1823 of the newly formed body has already been referred to.[3] The two small district synods, North Carolina and Maryland-Virginia, which alone remained to support the constitution of the first united Lutheran Church in America, had become discouraged by the strange turn of events and practically abandoned the hope that such a union could be further assured. It looked as if the only remnant to the high hopes which were initiated in 1818 was merely a formal constitution. S. S. Schmucker was then an active member of the Maryland-Virginia Synod, having already the year previous [4] drafted a paper on congregational polity known as the "Formula of Government and Discipline", which was accepted by that body and was

[2] This statement has been confirmed by the church historian and leading American Lutheran divine, Dr. H. E. Jacobs, in an interview granted the writer on January 8, 1925, at Philadelphia.

[3] *Ante*, pp. 39, 43.

[4] *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia, at Cumberland, (Maryland).—For the Year 1822.* See pp. 7–8.

early recommended to the General Synod for its adoption.

Concerning the heroic effort made by him in 1823 to save the General Synod from dissolution, he himself in a written lecture delivered to his theological students says:

. . . As soon as I heard of the recession of the Pennsylvania Synod, I felt convinced that faithfulness to the cause of our beloved Zion required a desperate effort to sustain the General Synod, notwithstanding the fearful odds of influence arrayed against it. I therefore immediately wrote to the principal brethren friendly to the cause, and in a few days determined to visit those brethren personally, and devise means to sustain the General Synod. With this view I started from home about a week after the news of the recession of the Pennsylvania Synod reached me, and visited the principal brethren. At Frederick in conjunction with Rev. D. F. Schaeffer, we wrote letters to all the ministers of the different synods who had been elected as delegates to the General Synod to be held in October ensuing, and besought them not to regard the course of the Pennsylvania Synod—assured them that the General Synod should be sustained, and begged them to attend.

I then went to Gettysburg to Rev. Herbst, who was one of our most zealous and active ministers, took him along to York, and there formed the following agreement, of which I still have the original memorandum, which runs as follows:

"At a meeting in York, July 15th, 1823, present J. G. Schmucker, J. Herbst and S. S. Schmucker, it was agreed:

". . . *Resolved,* That we are convinced of the importance of the General Synod.

". . . *Resolved,* That S. S. Schmucker promise and guarantee the presence of one or more members of the Maryland and Virginia Synod at the session of the Pennsylvania Special Conference to advocate the interests of the General Synod, and aid in forming plans for the furtherance of this object in conjunction with the Pennsylvania brethren."

. . . The conference met . . . in October in 1823. I had prepared and sent to them a long and earnest appeal, urging them by every proper motive not to think of abandoning the General Synod, which appeal was read and favorably considered. . . .

This General Synod, the second ever held in our American Church, consisted of seven ministers and two laymen: viz., Daniel and D. Sherer of North Carolina; Dr. Daniel Kurtz, David Schaeffer, myself, and Mr. Lehr, and J. Ebert, of Md. and Va.; Dr. J. G. Schmucker and Rev. Herbst, of West Pennsylvania.[5]

The reins of this body then fell to him, and he became the leading theologian of that school of men which became identified with this organization, and the conspicuous champion and interpreter of the Lutheran doctrines and confessions to be received and held by many of the children of Lutheran heritage in America. No name stands out so preëminently in the history of the American Lutheran Church as his, since the passing of Father Muhlenberg. His supreme effort of 1823 is in direct line begun by that Patriarch who in 1748 had set out in a similar way to unite the scattered forces of the church into a unitary organization.

One of the first tasks presented to the young leader was to interpret the constitution of the General Synod which so narrowly escaped abandonment. This came in the form of a "memorial from a member of the Tennessee Conference . . . desiring information relative to certain subjects connected with our General Synod", etc.[6] As a member of a committee of two, he replied

[5] The manuscript (seen by the present writer) which contains the above from the pen of S. S. Schmucker is still in possession of the Lutheran Historical Society, headquarters at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The quotation is from pp. 133–135 in *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D., First Professor of Theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary, at Gettysburg, Pa.*, by P. Anstadt, D.D. Friends and foes of S. S. Schmucker join in paying him the tribute of being the one man who saved the General Synod from dissolution.

[6] *Minutes of the Session of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Maryland & Virginia—Held in Middletown, Md., Oct. 17th, 18th, 19th, & 20th, 1824*, p. 7.

to this communication with the following interpretation of that constitution:

As to the supposed power of the Gen. Synod, to introduce new doctrines into the church, we would not consent to the General Synod's exercising any such power, and believe none were given her in the constitution. The unaltered Augsburg Confession is the only Confession which this synod receive, or which has been received by our church in this country; and even the *Plan Entwurf* expressly stated p. 5. sect. 4 that the Gen. Synod has no power to make any alterations in the doctrines hitherto received in our church, and the constitution of the Gen. Synod expresses the same idea in less perspicuous terms in Art. III. Sect. II. 3.

As to the excommunication &c. of such brethren, as might abandon some of the views of the Augsburg Confession, an examination of the constitution of the General Synod will teach you, that that body is nothing more than an *advisory* council, and therefore can have no power to excommunicate any minister, or layman, for any crime whatever. This power rests exclusively with each individual synod. All that the Gen. Synod can do, is, if they should observe any such deviation, to give their *advice* to the individual synod, & the nature of the advice which they would give, is best expressed in their own words, contained in the Address of the last General Synod: "that a man that is an heretic, who denies a fundamental doctrine, a doctrine essential to the christian scheme, we are bound, *"after the first and second admonition,* to reject." [7]

When in 1825 [8] it was resolved to establish a Lutheran Theological Seminary under the auspices of the General Synod, where "shall be taught, in the German and English languages, the fundamental doctrines of the Sacred Scriptures, as contained in the Augsburg Confession",[9] S. S. Schmucker was chosen to be its

[7] *Minutes of the Session of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Maryland & Virginia,* etc., pp. 18–19.

[8] The General Synod met every other year.

[9] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States; Convened at Frederick, (Md.) October, 1825,* p. 5.

first professor. With his election to this place of theological leadership is to be seen the first reference officially made by this body to any of the historic Lutheran Confessions. This is significant and in itself requires special consideration. Dr. Anstadt, a contemporary of S. S. Schmucker, in his *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.*, points out that "it was mainly through Dr. Schmucker's instrumentality that the Augsburg Confession was 'restored to its proper place' after the organization of the General Synod".[10] As early as 1820, in a letter addressed to his father, the young theological student at Princeton revealed his warm interest in the problems of the church by pointing out its special needs as he saw them, suggesting the need for a revival of the spirit of pietism and the necessity of a return on the part of the Lutheran Church to some definite confessional position. He says that he and Pastor Schaeffer of New York

> . . . promised each other, that in reliance on God, we would do everything possible to promote the following objects: In general to labor for the welfare of our church, that a rule may be established, according to which every applicant must be examined in regard to his personal Christianity, that the Augsburg Confession should again be brought up out of the dust, and every one must subscribe to the twenty-one articles, and declare before God, by his subscription, that it corresponds with the Bible, not *quantum*, but *quia;* and we promised to do everything possible to promote learning among us.[11]

In his diary of a trip to New York of that year occurs a similar expression in an account of the conversation with the same pastor:

[10] Anstadt, *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.*, p. 52, foot-note.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Relative to the propriety of our Synod adopting a confession of faith, we also [Schaeffer of New York and he] had some interchange of sentiments. He [Schaeffer] is of the opinion that something should be done, and ought to have been done many years ago. He *agreed* to the opinion that a confession should be adopted which *ought to include only fundamental doctrines;* and that would leave sufficient room for that liberty of thought, which all Protestants must retain, and yet would be sufficiently specific to exclude heresy from our body.

This ought to be subscribed by our clergy, and by this we might try those who are suspected of heresy. This would enable us effectually to exclude from the Church of Christ those pests of society, the Socinians.[12]

This early desire for a more definite confessional basis and the pledge on his part to the Augsburg Confession show two influences at work in his formative years: the influence of his theological preceptor, Dr. Helmuth, a veteran from the days of the Patriarch, private teacher of ministers, who carried with him the confessional Lutheran strain of that earlier period;[13] and the influence, by way of reaction, of the Lutheran situation in New York, where "the majority of the preachers are rank Socinians",[14] where departure from the traditional character of the church had become almost entirely realized. Added to this early pledge is another definite ambition which came over him in the years of his preparation. "When I left Princeton", he wrote, "there were three *pia de-*

[12] Diary of "Tuesday and Wednesday, 8th and 9th of Feb., 1820" in *ibid.*, p. 71.

[13] Dr. H. E. Jacobs in the same interview remarked: "Dr. Helmuth, teacher of both J. G. Schmucker and his son, carried over the confessional Lutheran strain into the later period."—Interview of January 8th, 1925.

[14] His own description of the Lutheran preachers of New York is given on p. 63 of Anstadt, *op. cit.*

sideria which were very near to my heart, for the welfare of our church. A translation of some one eminent system of Lutheran Dogmatics, a Theological Seminary, and a College for the Lutheran Church." [15]

His election to the theological chair in 1825 and subsequent teaching ministry at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for thirty-eight years, molding the doctrinal character of some four hundred students, gave him ample opportunity to carry out his wish in building up the church of his fathers according to the stamp of his own character and theological thinking. Elected to this position, he at once drafted a professorial oath, to which he himself promised allegiance, and which, according to his maturer thought, was a sufficient basis to guarantee the perpetuity of the Lutheran consciousness. The Constitution of the Theological Seminary is a product of his own pen and contains, along with the general doctrinal position, the professorial allegiance:

> Part I. . . . *Resolved,* 1. That the General Synod will forthwith commence, in the name of the Triune God . . . the establishment of a Theological Seminary, which shall be exclusively devoted to the glory of our Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. And that in this Seminary shall be taught, in the German and English languages, the fundamental doctrines of the Sacred Scriptures, as contained in the Augsburg Confession.[16] . . . 7. Any Professor may be impeached, at any time, for funda-

[15] This was in 1820. He realized all three desires. The college he helped to establish was Pennsylvania College, located at Gettysburg, an institution distinct from the Theological Seminary also located there. —P. Anstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

[16] *Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Located at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Together with the Statutes of the General Synod on which it is founded,* p. 3.

mental error in doctrine, immorality of deportment, inattention to the duties of his office, or incapacity to discharge them; . . .[17]

Part II. . . . Article I. . . . Introduction. *Design of this Institution.* . . . It is designed: . . . To provide our churches with pastors who sincerely believe, and cordially approve of, the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, as they are fundamentally taught in the Augsburg Confession, and who will therefore teach them in opposition to Deists, Unitarians, Arians, Antinomians, and all other fundamental errorists.[18]

. . . Article II . . . 9. The Board of Directors shall inspect the fidelity of the Professors, as well with regard to the doctrines actually taught, as to the manner of teaching them. If any just reason be given them to suspect either the orthodoxy, or piety . . . it shall be their sacred duty to institute an investigation . . .[19]

. . . Article III . . . 2. Every Professor elect of this institution, shall on the day of his inauguration, publicly pronounce and subscribe the oath of office required of the Directors, and also, the following declaration: "I solemnly declare in the presence of God and the Directors of this Seminary, that I do *ex animo,* believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired word of God, and the only perfect rule of faith and practice. I believe the Augsburg Confession and the Catechisms of Luther to be a summary and just exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the word of God. I declare that I approve of the general principles of church-government adopted by the Lutheran church in this country, and believe them to be consistent with the word of God. And I do solemnly promise not to teach any thing, either directly or by insinuation, which shall appear to me to contradict, or to be in any degree more or less remote, inconsistent with the doctrines or principles avowed in this declaration. On the contrary, I promise, by the aid of God, to vindicate and inculcate these doctrines and principles, in opposition to the views of Atheists, Deists, Jews, Socinians, Unitarians, Arians, Universalists, Pelagians, Antinomians, and all other errorists, while I remain a Professor in this Seminary.[20]

3. The preceding declaration shall be repeated by each Professor at the expiration of every term of five years, in the presence of the

[17] *Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States,* p. 5.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 7.

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 12.

[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 14–15.

Directors; and at any intermediate time, if required to do so by a vote of the Board of Directors. And no man shall be retained as Professor who shall refuse to make and repeat this declaration, in the manner and at the times above specified. . . .[21]

. . . Article V . . . Sect. 1. "It ought to be considered as an object of primary importance by every Student of the Seminary, not to lose that inward practical sense of the power of godliness . . ." nor to suffer his intellectual pursuits at all to impair it; but on the contrary, to aim at constant growth in piety . . . without this, all his other attainments will be of little value. . . .[22]

. . . Sect. 5. . . . The whole of every Lord's day shall be spent in devotional exercises, either social or secret. The books read are to be practical, and all intellectual pursuits not immediately connected with devotion or the religion of the heart, are on that day to be forborne. It is also recommended, that the first Wednesday of every month be set apart for special prayer and self-examination, and for exercises calculated to promote a missionary spirit.[23]

The charge delivered to him by Rev. D. F. Schaeffer, when he was formally inaugurated, is likewise significant:

. . . The Church which entrusts you with the preparation and formation of her pastors, demands of you (and in her behalf I solemnly charge you) to establish all students confided to your care, in that faith, which distinguishes our Church from others. . . . I hold it however as indispensable, for the peace and welfare of a

[21] *Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the General Synod*, etc., p. 15.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 20. The practice of setting aside the first Wednesday of every month is carried over from a similar observance at Princeton Seminary. One of Schmucker's early pupils at New Market, Virginia (where he held a "pro-seminary" in connection with his parish work prior to his election as professor in 1825), writes: "He [S. S. Schmucker] had studied for some time at Princeton Seminary, and introduced among us, his pupils, some practices prevalent in that school. One of them was the observance of the first Wednesday of every month as a day for special prayer and meditation. All study was laid aside, and it was a sort of half sacred, holy day. . . . I looked upon it as a piece of affected Puritanism. . . . On going to Princeton Seminary afterwards I found the custom in vogue."—*Life Reminiscences of an Old Lutheran Minister*, John G. Morris, D.D., p. 60.

Church, that unity of sentiment should prevail upon all important matters of faith and discipline, among the pastors thereof. Hence, I charge you, to exert yourself, in convincing our students that the Augsburg confession is a safe directory, to determine upon matters of faith, declared upon the Lamb's book. As to a difference of opinion, upon subjects of minor importance, by which different denominations of christians have been brought into existence, we have no objection provided the spirit of Christ prevails. The visible church is rather beautiful by such difference, as a garden is, by flowers of variegated colours. But the different genera and species, should be preserved according to their peculiar nature. The right of private judgment, Luther contended for, and hence the utmost liberality towards others, should ever characterize the pastor of the Lutheran church. Above all, the Church requires of you, my brother, to ground our students well, in the doctrine of the atonement by Christ.[24]

The Formula of Government and Discipline for congregations, which S. S. Schmucker had drafted for the Synod of Maryland-Virginia and which had been accepted by that body in 1823,[25] was approved by the General Synod the same year and recommended to other district synods. In 1827 he was named as a member of a committee of three to draw up "a constitution for the government of district Synods",[26] which he did and submitted to the General Synod at its next meeting. This constitution for district synods officially recommended by the General Synod in 1829 became the model synodical constitution of the later organized bodies of the Lutheran Church in America which sought affiliation with the larger body.[27] The

[24] *Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer,* Vol. I, No. 7, pp. 171–172. September, 1826.

[25] *Ante,* pp. 72–73.

[26] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Ev. Lutheran Church in the United States.—Convened at Gettysburg, Pa. October, 1827,* p. 9.

[27] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Synod of the Ev.*

model congregational constitution, together with the model synodical constitution, became known as the Formula of Government and Discipline for Congregations and Synods.[28] The specific doctrinal character of this important document is contained only in the vows required in the licensure and ordination of candidates:

CHAPTER XVIII. EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE OF CANDIDATES. . . .

. . . V. The *Ceremony of Licensure* shall be performed as follows: viz. after an address from the President as prescribed in the Liturgy, he shall read the duties and privileges of licentiates in Ch. X, Sec. VI—Sec. X. and then propose to him the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament

Luth. Church, In the United States.—Convened at Hagerstown, Md. October, 1829, pp. 7–8.

[28] S. S. Schmucker, in a manuscript lecture to his students, speaks of the circumstances and history of this Formula from first-hand experience, since his students "have no other means of arriving at them in detail." He says: "That part of the Formula which related to individual congregations; viz: the first seven chapters, was prepared by us . . . in New Market, Va., as a member of a committee, consisting of Revs. A. Reck, B. Kurtz, and myself, appointed by the Synod of Maryland and Virginia, on September 24, 1821. It was presented to the committee at a meeting, held March 5, 1822, in the house of Rev. A. C. Reck, then pastor of the church in Winchester, Va. After having been examined and adopted by said committee, it was reported to the Synod in August, 1822. . . . It was adopted by that body, and printed . . . for the first time unofficially, at the expense of the late Dr. Schaeffer and myself . . . April 23, 1823, for the purpose of being laid before the General Synod. Having been submitted to that body in October, 1823, it was approved and recommended to other synods for adoption. The second part of the Formula which relates to district synods; viz: from Chapter VII to Chapter XX, inclusive . . . was also prepared by us in conformity to the resolution of the General Synod at their session in Gettysburg, October, 1827, and reported to the next General Synod, convened at Hagerstown, October, 1829. It was adopted at the same session, and commended to the different district synods."—*Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.,* by P. Anstadt, D.D., pp. 127–128.

to be the word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice? 2. Tim. iii, 16. Eph. ii, 20.

2. Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession? 2. Tim. 1, 13.

3. Do you promise, by the aid of God faithfully to perform all the duties enjoined on you in this Formula, and to submit yourself to its rules of Government and Discipline, so long as you remain a member of a Lutheran Synod? 2. Pet. v, 5. . . .[29]

CHAPTER XIX. ORDINATION.

I. Whenever the Ministerium has decided that an individual shall be ordained, the ceremony may be performed, either at the time by the assembled Ministerium, or if preferred, in the church by which he has been called, by the Special Conference or by a Committee for the purpose by the President.

II. The Ceremony of ordination, wherever performed, shall be as follows: viz.

1. A sermon shall be preached by a person previously appointed, on the nature, duties & responsibilities of the ministerial office.

2. The President of the Ministerium, or the Chairman of the Conference or Committee, shall then, after a short address, such as is contained in the Liturgy, propose to the candidate the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, & the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsb. Confession?

3. Do you promise, by the aid of God, faithfully to perform all the duties enjoined on you in this Formula, and to submit yourself to its rules of Government and Discipline, so long as you remain a member of any Luth. Synod?

4. Do you believe that in seeking the ministerial office you are influenced by a sincere love to God our Saviour, and desire to promote his glory in the welfare of men.

5. Do you promise faithfully and zealously to preach the truths

[29] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Synod of the Ev. Luth. Church, In the United States. Convened at Hagerstown, Md. October, 1829,* pp. 38–39.

of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as contained in the Holy Scriptures? . . .[30]

At the same convention which elected him professor in the new Seminary, Rev. S. S. Schmucker was named on a committee "to prepare a Hymn-Book, Liturgy, and a collection of Prayers, in the English language, for the use of our Church, adhering particularly to the New York Hymn-Book, and German Liturgy of Pennsylvania, as their guides." This hymn-book was adopted by the General Synod and passed through many successive editions.[31] He was also a member of a committee to prepare a Catechism for the Synod and in a later published work declares that the plan of publishing *Luther's Catechism* and a supplementary explanation was largely due to his own insistence.[32]

[30] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Synod*, etc., p. 39.

[31] By the year 1845 it had passed through its thirty-seventh edition.

[32] The history of the General Synod's Catechism dates back to the first meeting of that body in 1821, when it was "*Resolved*, that, the present state of our church requiring it, a committee be appointed to compose an english catechism. . . . The Rev. Messrs. Endress, Schmucker [J. G.] Shober, Lochman and Schaeffer, were . . . appointed." (*Minutes of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened at Fredericktown . . . Md., Oct, 21, 22, 23, 1821*, p. 5). "One of their number," writes Prof. S. S. Schmucker, "Dr. Lochman, had actually made preparations for such a work, which he published on his own responsibility the succeeding year, 1822, before the meeting of the next General Synod. [See *ante*, pp. 60–62.] In 1823 this committee submitted their report, together with the materials for a *new* catechism. As these materials were not ready for the press, and the General Synod wished to act deliberately in this matter, the materials were committed to another committee, consisting of Rev. Messrs. Shober, D. F. Schaeffer, Herbst, and ourself, 'to examine and report thereon with additions.' This committee, principally through our own efforts, resolved to retain Luther's Catechism for the present, and to report an improved translation of the questions, What is your state by nature? &c., with explanatory additions on the decalogue, infant baptism and the eucharist, which were furnished by ourself,

This is significant when it is remembered that other catechisms had been widely circulated which had noticeably departed from the general plan and doctrinal character of that by Martin Luther.

The publication of this catechism reveals two characteristics of the leader of the church in this period, characteristics which followed him through the difficult days of rallying together the scattered forces and the different doctrinal strains of the Lutherans in this country, and which made him preëminently the man of the hour to bring about such a unity. First, it reveals his strong desire that the Lutheran Church in America should return to some definite confessional position which would carry on its particular genius without destroying "that liberty of thought, which all Protestants must retain".[33] Second, it reveals his own readiness to yield points of doctrinal differences in order that the church might be united on a platform broad enough to include the various doctrinal shades of opinion then current and yet remain fundamentally true to its generic character.[34] To have promoted union in that period, when leaders of the church disagreed on questions of doctrine which had come down through the historic Lutheran symbols, when non-confessional groups

were adopted by the next General Synod and published by their order. . . ."—*The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses*, p. 228, S. S. Schmucker, D.D.

[33] See *ante*, pp. 76–77, for the quotation from his diary of 1820. *Cf.* also the professional oath: "I believe the Augsburg Confession and the Catechisms of Luther to be a summary and just exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the word of God."—See *ante*, p. 79.

[34] See his interpretation of the Constitution of the General Synod in answer to a "memorial from a member of the Tennessee Conference". *Ante*, pp. 74–75.

clashed with those who were returning to a simple confessional basis, when alliances had been formed with other Protestant groups in preference to those of their own—to have promoted union on any other platform would have meant defeat. The type of leader needed at that hour was a man who was willing not only to carry on such a program but who was willing to welcome into official association such inherited doctrines of the church as might not be in accord with his own. His leadership was noticeably that of tact, perseverance, and patience.

The Catechism adopted by the General Synod in 1825,[35] which became the basis of succeeding editions,[36] contains the doctrines set forth by Luther in the Small Catechism of 1529 together with an explanation of these doctrines and an "Order of Salvation in Systematic Connection . . ." which is practically a reprint of a catechism issued in 1811 which bore no print of official authorization.[37] The doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the presence of the body and the blood of Christ in the Eucharist are plainly set forth:

[35] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States; Convened at Frederick, (Md.), October, 1825*, p. 9.

[36] The Catechism reached its twenty-sixth edition in 1857, two years after the appearance of the "Definite Synodical Platform".

[37] *Dr. Martin Luther's Smaller Catechism, Translated from the German—Frederick-Town—1811.* The identical words of explanation of the two sacraments which appear in the General Synod's Catechism, 3rd ed., 1829, are found on p. 25 of this 1811 edition. The title, *The Order of Salvation, in Systematical Connection, or an Analysis of the Doctrines of Christianity, which may be divided into two parts, the first of which treats of God, and the second of Man*, appears in both editions.

Part VII. The Order of Salvation. In Systematical Connection, *Or an Analysis* of the *Doctrines of Christianity* . . .

. . . The sacraments of the New Testament, viz.,

1. Baptism. Matt. xxviii, 19. Mark xvi, 16. by which such as do not maliciously resist, receive the Holy Ghost. Tit. iii, 5. and are born again. John iii. 5.

2. The Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. xi, 23–29. where the body and blood of Christ are in communion with bread and wine. 1 Cor. x. 16.[38]

Dost thou believe that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.[39]

What does the Lord Jesus give you in the Holy Supper?

The Lord Jesus gives me his body and blood. John vi, 54.

How do you receive the body of Christ?

I receive the body of Christ with the bread. 1 Cor. x, 16 . . .

How do you receive the blood of Christ?

I receive the blood of Christ with the wine. 1 Cor. x, 16.[40]

In the same edition of the Catechism, however, other interpretations of baptism and the Eucharist are set forth. The one sacrament is presented as the beginning of sanctification and the other as a *pledge* of forgiveness:

Where did the Holy Ghost begin this sanctification in you?

In the holy ordinance of Baptism, the Holy Ghost began this sanctification in me. Titus iii, 5, 7.[41]

How dost thou know this [That Christ died and brought forgiveness]?

[38] *Luther's Smaller Catechism, Correctly Translated from the Original.—Published under the auspices of The Ev. Lutheran General Synod of the United States of N. America,* pp. 23, 27, 3d ed. The identical words appear in the 26th ed. of 1857; p. 43: *Luther's Smaller Catechism, Translated from the Original. Published by the General Synod of the Evan. Lutheran Church in the United States.*

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 21, 3d ed.

[40] *Ibid.,* pp. 45–46.

[41] It is noteworthy that Titus 3: 5 is referred to where occurs the phrase "washing of regeneration", and is here used as a reference-passage to the idea of sanctification! *Ibid.,* 3d ed., p. 39.

From the Gospel, from the words of the institution of the sacrament, and from his body and blood, which are given me as a pledge therein.[42]

The Catechism was plainly a compromise on the part of S. S. Schmucker as to certain doctrines there presented. He himself remarked that the "committee, principally through our own efforts, resolved to retain Luther's Catechism for the present" [43]—an indication that there was no unanimity of agreement of the doctrines there set forth.

That he himself did not hold to the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist was publicly known by his translation of the *Biblical Theology of Storr and Flatt* which appeared in a first edition in 1826—a task to which he had been applying himself years before his election to the professorial chair at the new theological seminary. His views were known through his instruction at New Market, Virginia, of candidates for the ministry who had been attracted to his "pro-seminary".[44] The translation and edition of this

[42] *Luther's Smaller Catechism*, etc., supra., p. 21, 3rd ed.

[43] See *ante*, p. 84, footnote 32.

[44] His pupil of these earlier days, John G. Morris, writes: "After he had been settled there [New Market, Virginia] several years he [Schmucker] conceived the idea of establishing a sort of Pro-Seminary. This was in 1823, and it gradually led to the founding of the schools we now have at Gettysburg. Here, the second time, I became the pupil of S. S. Schmucker. There were five other young men who constituted the class. . . . Our teacher was at that time engaged in translating the Theology of Storr and Flatt . . . As a theologian he had read many of the writings of our older authors, and was originally trained in the schools of Mosheim, Reinhard, Storr and Flatt, and others of the same modified type. He adopted their views on the Sacraments and strongly defended them."—*Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry*, John G. Morris, pp. 127, 128; 122, 123.

theology, which became the fulfilment of the first of his *pia desideria*,[45] urged upon him by Dr. Moses Stuart of Andover,[46] sets forth his own doctrinal position with respect to the sacraments. The compromise on the General Synod's Catechism as far as he was concerned was made on such doctrines which he considered were non-fundamental.

When Christ commands his disciples to administer the ordinance of baptism . . . he thereby declares Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be the God of those who are baptized. . . . This declaration amounts to (1) a solemn promise of the divine protection and favour; and as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to be considered the God of the baptized, it includes a promise of those specific blessings which, according to the doctrines of Christ, are to be expected from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In short, by virtue of the union with Christ, (2) into which we enter by baptism, we are assured not only of an interest in the death of Christ, and of the remission of sins (3) which result from it, but also of our union with God the Father as our Father, (4) and our consequent title to eternal life; (5) as well as of our union with the Holy Spirit, and the participation of his gracious influences. (6) In short, all the blessings, which have a reference to salvation, and for which we are indebted to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are promised to the subjects of baptism; and, in case they do not deny themselves the enjoyment of them, are actually bestowed upon them.[47]

[45] For his *pia desideria*, see *ante*, pp. 77–78.

[46] "Dr. Koethe, of Alstadt, near Jena, urged him to take Storr and Flatt, and Dr. Moses Stuart, of Andover, strongly urged him to do so. He so decided and translated, re-arranged, enlarged and published this work. The first edition was printed in Andover in two volumes 8vo., by Hagg and Gould, in 1826. The second edition, somewhat abridged, also printed in Andover, by Gould and Neuman, one volume, in 1836. It was also reprinted in England in 1845."—*Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.*, P. Anstadt, D.D., p. 112.

[47] *An Elementary Course of Biblical Theology, Translated from the Work of Professors Storr and Flatt, with Additions*, by S. S. Schmucker, D.D., Professor of Theology in the Theol. Sem. of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Gettysburg, Pa., p. 521. Second Edition.

The passage from Titus 3:5, a common source-passage for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, is explained in this same work, as

> supposed to refer to the Gospel, as the true means of moral purification, in opposition to the Levitical purifications; [48]

for, if it referred to baptism itself,

> it would have been necessary for the apostle to add some explanatory clause.

For him, the term "regeneration" is employed in this work to refer to "the change of heart and reformation of life, consequent on faith." [49]

Professor Schmucker's doctrinal view of the Lord's Supper is explicitly stated in the same publication, under the heading, "Appendix on the Mode of the Saviour's Presence in the Eucharist, by the Translator." [50] First, he deprecates the bitter controversy and its resulting disruption among Protestants over a doctrine of minor importance in Scripture:

> Although this ordinance was designed as a memorial of the dying love of the Redeemer, it has unhappily been the occasion of much *controversy* in the *christian* church. The strongly figurative language of the Saviour, together with the careful repetition of the precise words by the apostle Paul and the explanation annexed by him, was variously interpreted even in the earlier centuries of the christian history, and a kind of mysterious influence ascribed to this ordinance. In the middle ages of ignorance and superstition, views of the grossest kind obtained currency; until, in the year 1215, the doctrine of *transubstantiation* was formally adopted as the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church . . .[51]
>
> But whilst the Reformers agreed in rejecting this papal error, it

[48] *An Elementary Course of Biblical Theology*, etc., p. 524.
[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 575–579.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 545 ff. (Vol. II, p. 328, in the first edition.)
[51] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.* supra, p. 545.

is much to be regretted that they could neither harmonize among themselves what should be substituted in its stead, nor consent to walk together in love. . . . Alas! that men, distinguished so highly for intellect, and chosen of God to accomplish so great a work, should betray such a glaring want of liberality toward each other; that having gloriously coöperated in vanquishing the papal beast, they should turn their weapons against each other, for a point not decided in scripture, and therefore of minor importance![52]

He then gives an account of three views held by Lutheran divines, the later view more acceptable to present Lutheran theologians:

The first was that adopted by Luther and the major part of the Lutheran church in the sixteenth and seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries, as also by the Moravian church until the present day. . . .

I. *The bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged; but the invisible, glorified body and blood of Christ are also actually present at the celebration of the eucharist, and exert an influence on all those who receive the bread and wine; not indeed present in that form nor with those properties which belonged to the Saviour's body on earth, such as visibility, tangibility, etc., for these it no longer possesses, but present with the new and elevated properties which now belong to its glorified state.*[53]

There seems to have been a peculiar fondness among the advocates of this view, to use the figurative language of the Saviour and speak of eating his body and drinking his blood; but they denied that they understood these terms literally, and rejected the idea of a carnal, material reception. Their idea seems to have generally been, that we thereby come into *communion* with, and under the *influence* of the glorified Saviour.[54]

II. The second view of this doctrine is that, which was early entertained by some Lutheran divines, and, in the last century became generally current.

[52] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 546.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 547.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 547–548. The author then quotes from Dr. Mosheim's *Elementa Theol. Dogm.*, Vol. II, pp. 328, 329, where it is denied that this view is justly termed *"impanation"*, *"subpanation"*, or *"consubstantiation"*. Rather, "We commonly call his presence in this holy ordinance, a 'sacramental presence.'"

That the bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged; that the glorified human nature of Christ is not substantially (essentially) present at all, but only influentially, efficaciously or virtually; that is, by a special supernatural influence exerted on all communicants, at the time when they receive the bread and wine.

This was probably the opinion of that distinguished ornament of the Lutheran church, Melanchthon, who rejected the doctrine of the *substantial* presence of the glorified human nature, and wisely maintained, that as the scriptures had not specified the mode of the Saviour's presence, every individual should be left to the free exercise of his own judgment. Many of the most judicious divines adopted the views of Melanchthon, although he and they were treated with much intolerance by the other party. The Formula Concordiæ, which was published in 1577, expressly to counteract this opinion, strange as it appears, seems itself, in some places to inculcate it, and is thus inconsistent with itself. . . .[55]

Among the later divines who have asserted the merely virtual or influential presence of the Saviour in the eucharist may be ranked Reinhard, Zachariae, Storr, Flatt, Marheinecke, etc. . . .[56] [57]

III. *The third opinion is, that there is no presence of the glorified* HUMAN *nature of the Saviour, either substantial or influential, nor anything mysterious or supernatural in the eucharist; yet that whilst the bread and wine are merely symbolic representations of the Saviour's absent body by which we are reminded of his sufferings, there is also a* PECULIAR *and* SPECIAL, *spiritual blessing bestowed by the divine Saviour on all worthy communicants, by which their faith and christian graces are confirmed.* This view seems

[55] The author refers to Formula Concordiæ, Art. VII, No. XXI, p. 604, which he translates: "And by that word (spiritually) we exclude those Capernaitish notions, concerning a *gross* and *carnal* presence which have been attributed to our churches by the sacramentarians, in defiance of all our public protestations against them. And when we use this term (spiritually,) we wish to be understood as signifying, that the body and blood are received, and eaten, and drank spiritually in the holy supper. For although the participation is effected by the mouth, the manner in which it is done is *spiritual*."

[56] The entire above quotation from S. S. Schmucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 548–549.

[57] The author presents extracts from Calvin which belong to this second view—"the only difference between the extracts of Calvin and the views of some Lutherans is, that the former confines this supernatural influence to believers, whilst the latter extends it to all who partake of the consecrated elements." *Ibid.*, p. 550.

sometimes to have been maintained by Melanchthon and by some of those Lutheran divines, who were termed Sacramentarians; and is received by not a few theologians of the Lutheran church in Europe and America at the present day.[58]

According to this view, the Holy supper exerts its influence as a symbolic representation of divine truth, . . . but its worthy reception is also the condition of a *special spiritual* blessing from the *divine* Saviour, beyond that of the other means. . . .[59] [60]

The author then concludes by saying that the Lutheran Church no longer imposes a definite view on the nature of the presence; although its divines in this country favor the views of a spiritual rather than that of a bodily presence.

After a protracted and unprofitable struggle, the Lutheran church has long since settled down in the happy conviction, that on this, as on all other subjects not clearly determined by the inspired volume, her sons shall be left to follow the dictates of their own conscience, having none to molest them or make them afraid. In the Lutheran church in this country, each of the above views has some advocates, though the great body of our divines, if we mistake not, embraces either the second or third.[61]

Under his guidance and direction the General Synod grew steadily and became the most formidable body of the Lutheran Church in America. As is to be expected by the character of his leadership,[62] there continued, within the association of this organization, conflicting views and opinions on doctrines as well as different degrees of attachment to the confessional documents of the historic church. The body aimed at homogeneity with respect to fundamentals and

[58] S. S. Schmucker, *op. cit.*, p. 550.
[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 550–551.
[60] Zwingli's symbolical view is given as a fourth.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 552.
[62] See *ante*, pp. 85–86.

liberty of thought with respect to non-fundamentals. Discussions, as also are to be expected, arose as to what doctrines were to be regarded as fundamental, but did not reach a point of serious difficulty until the organization had grown well into the third decade of its history.

An account of the confessional position of those synods in this period uniting with this body will reveal such differences. The non-confessional character of the only two synods, viz., North Carolina and Maryland-Virginia, which remained in 1823 to support the plan of the General Synod, has already been considered.[63] The constitution of the new body, it has already been shown,[64] contained no mention of a definite confessional position. Alliances on the part of Lutheran synods with other Protestant communions continued even after 1823, on the one hand with the Episcopal group and on the other with the German Reformed group.

The Constitution for district synods prepared by S. S. Schmucker, approved and recommended by the General Synod in 1829,[65] however, proved to be a means of strengthening the bond of unity in an official recognition "that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession". This synodical platform was adopted by

[63] On Synod of North Carolina, see *ante*, pp. 30 ff., 50–51, 65 ff. On Synod of Maryland-Virginia, see *ante*, p. 51.

[64] See *ante*, pp. 37–39.

[65] The doctrinal character of "Formula of Government and Discipline for Congregations and Synods" has been cited; *ante*, pp. 81–84.

the Synod of North Carolina[66] and by the Synod of Maryland.[67] The Synod of Virginia, which separated in a peaceable way from Maryland in 1829, at its organization meeting adopted its own doctrinal platform:

> Resolved, That the basis of the Constitution of this body be the Holy Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, as taught therein, and the unaltered Augsburg Confession.[68]

This synod withdrew immediately from the General Synod, giving as its reason, among others:

> After taking into consideration the imprudent precedent, i. e., that of the General Synod in attempting to impose upon us a Constitution, the composition of a few individuals, believing that we best knew what would prove salutary to the preservation of peace and harmony in our respective churches. . . .[69]

Strange enough, this same synod two years later adopted the constitution which had been written by S. S. Schmucker and recommended by the General Synod, with no mention of a definite confessional position other than that required of candidates for licen-

[66] The German translation of the recommended constitution appears on pp. 9–26 in *Verrichtungen der Evangelischen Lutherischen Synode und dessen Ministerium, Vom Staat Nord-Carolina und angränzenden Staaten. Versammlet in der St. Paul's Kirche, Lincoln County, den 16ten May, 1832.*

[67] The recommended constitution appears on pp. 24–32 in *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, Convened at Emmittsburg, Frederick County, on the 15th October, 1837.*

[68] "Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Conference held at Woodstock, Virginia, August 10 & 11, 1829"—a typewritten abstract found in library of the Lutheran Historical Association at Gettysburg, pp. 6–7.

[69] *An Extract from the Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of the State of Virginia, Convened at Zion's Church, Botetourt County, Virginia, October, 1831,* p. 7.

sure and ordination.[70] Surrounded in the South, as in the case of North Carolina Synod, by the Henkelites, this same synod also became the target for criticism as having departed from the inherited Lutheran confessional doctrines. The Synod of Virginia finally was provoked to resolve

> That this body would inform the vacant congregations of our church in Virginia, that she does not recognize the members of the so-called Tennessee Conference as Evangelical Lutheran ministers.[71]

Two of the reasons given for this action were:

> Because they virtually deny the necessity of scriptural regeneration, and substitute the simple attendance upon the external ordinances of the church, as all that is necessary for salvation.
>
> Because they are opposed to most of the benevolent enterprises and efforts of the church, contemplating the diffusion of divine truth, and promotive of vital godliness:—such as Bible, Missionary, Tract, and Temperance Societies, as well as Sabbath Schools, Prayer Meetings, Revivals, &c.[72]

This synod was evidently in general sympathy with the views of the well known theological professor at Gettysburg and found its way in 1839 into a hearty union with the General Synod.[73]

[70] Constitution printed in full in *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of Virginia: Convened at New-Market, Shenandoah County, Va., October 13, 14, & 15, 1833*, pp. 9–20.

[71] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Virginia, Convened at the Lutheran Church, Madison Court-House, Virginia, on the 19th of May, 1838*, p. 8.

[72] *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Virginia Convened at Zion's Church, Roanoke County, Va., May 20th, 21st and 22d, 1839*, p. 7.

[73] "Whereas, the late modifications of the Constitution of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States [revision of 1835 pertaining to representation and to recommendations of new publications to district synods] have made it, what alone it should be,

As early as 1824, the Synod of South Carolina was organized around "the Augsburgh Confession of Faith" as "the point of union in our Church".[74] Candidates applying for licensure or ordination in this synod "should be well acquainted . . . . in particular, to the peculiar doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." [75] This synod did not at once affiliate with the General Synod, but adopted the Formula of congregational polity which, written by S. S. Schmucker, had been published by the General Synod.[76] When in 1833 it was decided to unite with the General Synod, it was explicitly stated that such a union meant:

> That the General Synod is now, and will ever continue, simply as an advisory body, having no control over the acts of the Individual Synods; and that no recommendation from the General Synod shall be viewed as binding, till it has been regularly submitted to and adopted by this Synod. . . .
>
> That this Synod shall ever retain the right of introducing to their people such Catechisms, Hymn Books, and other works of a devotional character, as they shall deem most conducive to the interests of our Southern Church.[77]

strictly and exclusively an advisory body, consulting alone the fraternal unity and prosperity of the church, without the right of legislation over or for it: therefore,—*Resolved*, That this Synod approves of said General Synod in its present constitutional limitations."—*Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Virginia Convened at Zion's Church, Roanoke County, Va., May 20th, 21st and 22d, 1839*, p. 12.

[74] *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened in Lexington District, S. C.* A. D. *1824*, p. 5.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[76] *Extracts from the Minutes of the Eighth Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened at Sandy-Run, Lexington District, S. C., December, 1831*, pp. 9–10.

[77] *Extracts from the Minutes of the Tenth Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened in St. Stephen's Church, Lexington Village, Lexington District, S. C. . . . [1833]*, p. 12.

This synod established its own theological seminary at Lexington, South Carolina, and adopted a constitution for that institution similar to the one which S. S. Schmucker had presented to the General Synod. The Southern Synod, however, maintained a more definite doctrinal platform for its seminary:

ART. I. DESIGN OF THE INSTITUTION.

Sec. 1. Our Theological Institution is designed to provide our churches with pastors, who sincerely believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God; who will cordially preach the doctrines contained therein, and who acknowledge, that the Augsburgh confession contains the fundamental doctrines of the christian religion. . . .

ART. III. OF THE PROFESSORS . . .

Sec. 2. Every Professor elect of this institution, shall . . . subscribe . . . the following declaration: *I declare, solemnly, in the presence of God, and before the Directors of this Seminary, that I from my heart believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired word of God, and the only rule of our faith and practice. I acknowledge the Augsburgh confession, and the greater and smaller catechism of Luther to have always been considered by our Church in Europe and America as symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and I believe that they contain the fundamental articles of the Christian Faith. . . . I promise to vindicate and to teach the regeneration of the heart, manifested in a newness of life. . . .*[78]

It entered the larger body without adopting the recommended constitution for district synods and with a leaning toward a more definite doctrinal character than had characterized other bodies in that association. Yet it found a hearty welcome.

[78] "Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South-Carolina and Adjacent States" in *Extracts from the Minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened at St. John's Church, Charleston, S. C. . . . 1837*, pp. 39, 41.

In 1825 the Synod of West Pennsylvania was organized [79] by a group of men who disagreed with the action of withdrawal on the part of the Mother Synod, the Pennsylvania Ministerium, and remained a strong supporter of the principles of the General Synod.

In 1831 the Hartwick Synod was organized by a group in western New York, seceding from the New York Ministerium, and at its organization meeting, at the urgent request of S. S. Schmucker in a letter to that body, it at once affiliated with the General Synod and adopted the "Formula for the government and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church". [80] This district synod continued to join hands with the New York Ministerium in maintaining the Hartwick Theological Seminary, in operation as early as 1815, the oldest Lutheran seminary in the United States.

In 1836 the synod over which Drs. Kunze and Quitman had each, successively, so long presided, and which had, after having taken part in initiating the movement toward a general body of Lutherans in this country, withdrawn,[81] decided again to unite with the General Synod, under the following terms:

Resolved, That this Ministerium accede to the Constitution of the General Synod, as proposed to be amended at its last meeting.

Provided, it be understood, that by this act we do not recognize all the principles contained in the "Constitution for Synods, and in the Discipline for Churches," recommended by that body.

[79] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States; Convened at Frederick, (Md.) October, 1825,* p. 11.

[80] *Extracts from the Minutes of the First Session of the Hartwick Synod and Ministerium of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York; convened at St. Paul's Church, Johnstown, Montgomery County, September 24, 1831,* pp. 9–10.

[81] See *ante,* pp. 39–42.

Provided further, That the General Synod be regarded as an advisory body only, and that none of its proceedings be binding upon us, until acted upon by this Ministerium, nor be binding upon any congregation in connection with us, until adopted by it.

Provided further, That we retain the present constitution of our own Ministerium, and our present Hymn Book and Liturgy. . . .[82]

The New York Ministerium was welcomed with open arms [83] into the General Synod, even though it expressly stated its refusal to accept the recommended constitution for district synods and its declaration to remain faithful to its own constitution, which contained no reference to allegiance on its part to any of the Lutheran confessions.[84] The following extracts from a discourse "On the Fundamental Principle of the Reformation", delivered in 1831 before the New York Ministerium and published by order of that body, by the principal and professor of theology of Hartwick Seminary, reveals the spirit of confessional laxity and freedom of inquiry which continued to prevail in that body.

No creed but the Bible; historic human creeds now

[82] *Minutes of the Forty-First Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium, of the State of New York, and Adjacent Parts.—Convened in the Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church, New Germantown, Hunterdon County, New Jersey. On the Tenth and Following Days of September,* A. D. *1836,* p. 19.

[83] "*Resolved,* That we hail with peculiar gratification our brethren of the New York Synod as delegates to the General Synod: and hope that the good example of that reverend body will soon be imitated by all the district Synods of our Church in the United States, who are as yet not connected with this body."—*Proceedings of the Ninth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened at Hagerstown, Md., June, 1837,* p. 18.

[84] The second edition of *The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York, and Adjacent States and Countries, Revised and Adopted in General Synod* [not referring to the larger body], *Sept. 3,* A. D. *1816.* This constitution has already been given, *ante,* pp. 40–41.

to be regarded as "the Shibboleths of a darker age"; the Augsburg Confession frankly containing doctrines now regarded as obsolete and erroneous;—such were the bold declarations of a prominent Lutheran divine before a Lutheran assembly which, jealous of its constitutional freedom, guardedly entered six years later into the larger body:

> The only true principle of Lutheranism and of Protestantism is, that *"The Bible is our sole and sufficient rule of faith and practice"* . . .
>
> That the Reformers, and their immediate succesors, did not at once discover the full meaning, nor at all times remain true to their own principles, is what a knowledge of human infirmity might lead us to expect; and that, especially, on account of the unhappy disputes that early broke out, they departed afterwards far enough from them, so that the Sun of pure gospel light was again overshadowed by a cloud of human inventions—is not to be denied.[85]

> We object not to the propriety, that the Church should have a system of Divinity, containing the various doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, in a harmonious and perspicuous order. . . . But this, if we mistake not, is not the view taken by the advocates of creeds. They want a statement of doctrines essential to be believed by every one, to which every member, and especially every teacher, shall subscribe. . . . But is it not doing violence to the conscience to require a man to assert that he believes such a creed . . . is exactly conformable to the word of God, and that he will neither teach nor believe otherwise than the creed directs. . . . Does he not lay a snare for his conscience, such as no considerate person would wish to be exposed to? When a man publicly and solemnly professes to receive the Bible for his guide, he knows what he is about. . . . Here is a safe footing for the most delicate conscience. If, indeed, a man is not satisfied on this fundamental point, then he

[85] *A Discourse Delivered at Schaghticoke, on the First Sunday in September, 1831, before the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York, on the Fundamental Principle of the Reformation,* p. 4. S. B. Miller, A.M., Professor of Theology, and Principal of Hartwick Seminary. Published by "The Committee on Publications", by order of the Synod.

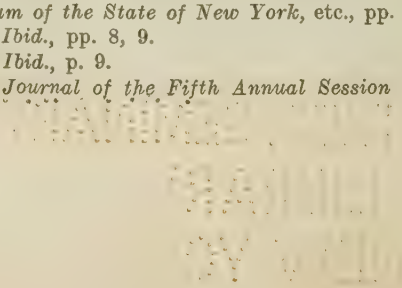
has no right to call himself a Christian, much less to undertake to instruct others in the character of a Christian Minister. . . .[86]

Let me refer you to the Augsburg Confession. No one, competent to judge, will deny that it contains the two following positions: That no one who should die without having received baptism can be saved; and that in the Lord's Supper we actually, not symbolically, or figuratively, but actually receive the body and blood of Christ; the same body that was slain, the same blood that was shed on the Cross. Now few of our ministers, and few of our people, I am bold to say, in this country at least, hold such a belief. Yet such is the language and meaning of the Augsburg Confession. To say that the words may be differently understood, is only to say that the Augsburg Confession is not in all its parts the creed of many who yet call themselves Lutherans, and I candidly acknowledge that I am of that number. Subterfuge and mental reservation may be very convenient for Jesuits and hypocrites, but they form no part of a true Protestant's creed, nor of a true Christian's character. . . .[87]

All human creeds in short are no better than a Chinese shoe, by which the living foot being cramped, never attains its proper shape and natural proportions. A better taste, if not a holier spirit is gaining ground in the Christian world. These wretched partition walls that have so long separated those who ought to look upon each other as brethren of one family, are beginning to be less regarded and the Shibboleths of a darker age are no longer employed as signals to murder the character, if not the person of one that belongs to a different tribe. And as the Lutheran Church took the lead in the first Reformation, may it not be behindhand in the second![88]

In 1833 "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the West" was organized and found its way into union with the General Synod in 1841, adopting the constitution *in toto*.[89] This synod, in adopting the Formula

[86] *Discourse Delivered . . . before the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York,* etc., pp. 6, 7, 8.
[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[89] *Journal of the Fifth Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran*



of Government and Discipline which had been prepared by S. S. Schmucker, reveals the wide influence which the Gettysburg professor exerted at this period; for the Synod of the West held meetings in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky. At its initial meeting, it expressed itself on doctrinal matters in a thoroughgoing way. Of interest here are the statements presented on the two sacraments:

It has been said and believed by some, that we consider baptism to be regeneration; but *this is entirely incorrect.* We hold no such doctrine. We consider baptism to be a sacrament appointed by Jesus Christ, as the initiatory rite into his Church, and as a *means* of grace, i. e., of regeneration and sanctification. By the right use of this ordinance, we believe that the promised grace is not only offered and exhibited, but really conferred by the Holy Ghost; yet we do not confine the efficacy of the rite to that moment of time, wherein it was administered.[90]

On the Lord's Supper.

On this subject, but little need be said. The *mode* of the glorified Saviour's presence in this rite, is not believed by any, except the Papists, and the *real presence,* is so commonly admitted by the different Protestant denominations, that all dispute upon the subject has subsided. God grant, that on such a solemn and impressive subject, there may never again be occasion to commence it anew.[91]

Such was the confessional character of the district synods that rallied around the constitution of the Gen-

Synod of the West, Convened at Hillsboro, Illinois, October 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 1839, p. 15.

[90] *Proceedings of the Convention held in Jeffersontown, Jefferson Co., Kentucky, Began October 11th,* A. D. *1834,* p. 7.

[91] *Ibid.,* p. 12. The Lutheran Synod of the West practised open communion. "This has long been common among us. All who are in good standing in other fundamentally orthodox denominations, are always invited to partake with us. This will be seen from the following invitation contained in our liturgy, page xxxxv: 'In the name of Christ our common and only Master, I say to all who own him as their Saviour, and resolve to be his faithful subjects: ye are welcome to this feast of love.'"

eral Synod up to 1840. Seven district synods [92]—316 congregations, 25,524 communicant members, and 118 ordained ministers—made up the complex character of the united body in 1839.[93] The future of the body had been made secure by wise and tactful leadership.

The exposition of Lutheran doctrines and confessions taught at Gettysburg to the rising generation of American Lutheran ministers educated at that institution under S. S. Schmucker is found in a work entitled *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as avowed before the Diet at Augsburg in MDXXX*, published by Professor Schmucker in 1834.[94] This work is a pioneer publication in the field of Lutheran dogmatics in the English language in this country.[95] It was undertaken by a resolution of the General Synod in 1831, that:

> Whereas, this Body has been solicited by several of the Synods connected with it, to encourage the publication of such works as are calculated to meet the practical wants of our church members, to correct the erroneous views of our doctrines and discipline, prevailing in some sections of our country, and to disseminate, as far as possible, the pure and salutary doctrines of the Lutheran Church; therefore

[92] The Synods of Maryland, West Pennsylvania, Hartwick, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Virginia. (The Synod of the West the same year voted to enter the General Synod.)

[93] See *Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened at Chambersburg, Pa., June, 1839.*

[94] Andover, 1834.

[95] In an interview of January 12, 1925, at Philadelphia, granted the present writer, Dr. H. E. Jacobs remarked that "no Lutheran Dogmatics had appeared in English in America before the publication of S. S. Schmucker's *Popular Theology*."

Resolved, That this Synod will cheerfully encourage, by its sanction, the publication of the following works:

1. The Lutheran Manual, to contain the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession, with brief notes; the entire system of church government, as published by the General Synod; and a very brief sketch of the history of the Lutheran Church, from its origin to the present time. . . .[96]

Professor Schmucker, who, elected to a place on both the Editing and Book Committees, to superintend the publications of the synod, and who undertook to prepare a work in accordance with the resolution, served notice to the convention of 1833 that it would shortly appear.[97] The strange silence on the part of the General Synod in 1835 with respect to the appearance of S. S. Schmucker's *Popular Theology,* although several other publications were officially noticed and recommended,[98] is an index to the conflict of opinions which still obtained and the hesitancy on the part of the constituents of that body to commit themselves definitely to one system of Lutheran dogmatics. The body, as has already been pointed out, was not a homogeneous one. This publication may be taken as an attempt on the part of the Gettysburg theologian to direct the church into a more definite expression of the doctrinal tenets to be held and encouraged by the Lutheran church in this country.

[96] *Proceedings of the Sixth General Synod of the Evan. Luth. Church in the United States—Convened at Frederick, Md., Oct. & Nov., 1831,* p. 7.

[97] *Proceedings of the Seventh General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States—Convened at Baltimore, October, 1833,* p. 17.

[98] See *Proceedings of the Eighth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States. Convened at York, Penn., June, 1835.* Nor is there any mention of the work in 1837.

Some extracts from this theological work will reveal his general doctrinal position and the channel into which he was directing the church at this period:

On matters of non-fundamental importance, Christians should agree to controvert with lenity, and differ in peace. Entire harmony of opinion was not an attribute of the church even under apostolic guidance; nor have we any evidence, that diversity of view on minor points, was regarded as a barrier to ecclesiastical communion. Fundamental errorists, indeed, ought to be the subjects of uncompromising controversy, and of exclusion from church privileges. . . .

The error of creeds lies not in their being reduced to paper, but in their undue length, and rigour of construction on those minor points which ought not to be embraced in them. There is little doubt that in each of the several denominations termed orthodox, there are and always have been members living in harmony, who differ from each other as much as the symbols of the several churches.

As the great Head of the church has so extensively owned the labours of all these denominations; the ground held by them in common should be considered fundamental, and the points of difference regarded in a secondary light as legitimate subjects of free and friendly inquiry.[99]

The Lutheran Church in the United States, which contains 1050 churches and about 48,000 regular communing members, has indeed always regarded the Augsburg Confession as the authorized summary of her doctrines, but has not required any oath of obligation to all its contents. The General Synod of the Lutheran Church has adopted only the 21 doctrinal articles, omitting even the condemnatory clauses of these and also the entire catalogue of Abuses corrected. No minister, however, considers himself bound to believe every sentiment contained in these twenty-one articles; but only the fundamental doctrines.[100]

[99] *Elements of Popular Theology with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX.*—Preface, pp. iv–v. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.

[100] The author then refers to the pledge required of candidates for licensure and ordination in the General Synod. See *ante*, pp. 82–84.

The Lutheran divines of this country are not willing to bind either themselves or others, to anything more than the fundamental doctrines of the Christian revelation, believing that an immense mass of evil has resulted to the church of God, from the rigid requisition of extensive and detailed creeds. The Saviour and his apostles have left no other creed than that contained in the Scriptures . . . we can see no sufficient warrant for any Christian church to require as a term of admission or communion, greater conformity of view than is requisite to harmony of feeling and successful coöperation, in extending the kingdom of Christ. . . .[101]

In short, it cannot be denied, that the enormous amplitude of the principal Protestant Symbols and the unqualified assent to them which was for a long time required, were and ever would be a bone of endless contention, and the prolific mother of bigotry and sectarianism. Had the early protestants endeavoured to select the principal and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, required a belief of them from all applicants for admission into their ranks, and agreed among themselves that discrepance of views on matters of non-fundamental nature, should neither be a bar to ecclesiastical communion nor fraternal affection; they would have saved the church from the curse of those *discussions,* by which piety was in a great degree destroyed, and on several occasions, the very foundations of Protestantism shaken. . . .

But although Lutheran divines are strenuous advocates for liberty of thought, and free, untrammeled investigation of God's word; there is really as much doctrinal agreement and more harmony of feeling among them, than is found in any other church in America.[102]

Concerning particular doctrines, the author remarks that this book "contains the principal views which we believe are entertained by the great mass of our divines . . . not designed to be in any sense a standard to regulate the opinions of others . . ." [103] The Augsburg Confession (with the omission of the condemnatory clauses) is used as the basis of the discussion:

[101] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[On the Sabbath Day] By sanctifying it, he [God] set it apart for holy purposes; and thus rendered obligatory on the entire human family of every generation and age, the religious observance of one day in seven.[104]

The Lutheran church has always regarded the doctrine of natural depravity, as a primary article of the Christian System. . . .[105] *The Consequences of natural depravity.* On this important subject, the language of the [Augsburg] Confession is somewhat indistinct.

The first signification, which the words [the second article of the Augsburg Confession [106]] admit, is, that the natural depravity, with which we are born, is prior to all voluntary action by us, charged to us as guilt. . . . Those of our earlier divines who embraced this view . . . believed that by virtue of some covenant relation to ["Adam as the federal head of the whole human family"] . . . the guilt of his personal voluntary act was imputed to his posterity, and thus involved them all in the curse of temporal and eternal death.

The *second* interpretation, which the latter clause of this Article admits is, that "this disease or natural disorder of our bodily and mental constitution . . . becomes the *occasion* of eternal death to all who voluntary indulge in these sinful propensities, and do not avail themselves of those means of grace by which the Holy Spirit regenerates the soul. The confession mentions only one of these means, namely, baptism, but it is evident that its authors did not intend to designate this as the only means of grace, for the German copy of it, published by Melancthon himself in 1533, reads thus: "who are not regenerated by baptism and faith in Christ, through the *gospel* and Holy Spirit." From this it is also evident, that Melancthon, who, as is well known, penned the Confession, had reference to adults in the clause "condemneth those who are not born again," because infants are incapable either of reading or understanding "the gospel." The advocates of this view do not believe, that the progenitor of the human race did or could sustain any such relation to his posterity, as would render just a literal imputation of the *guilt* of his sins to them. The Lutheran church

[104] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 111.

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[106] "Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with a depraved nature, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards him, but with sinful propensities: and that this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin, and still condemns and causes eternal death to those, who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit."—*Ibid.*, p. 123.

regards either of these opinions as consistent with the belief of the general doctrine of natural depravity, though her divines, at present, very generally embrace the latter.[107]

Our own views on this disputed subject, may be summed up in the following features:

1. All mankind, in consequence of their descent from fallen Adam, are born with a depraved nature—a predisposition to sin.

2. This natural depravity disqualifies its subjects for heaven. . . . We have not the qualifications requisite for the enjoyment of heaven, having no spiritual appetites. But we cannot suppose, that God would condemn us to positive and eternal misery, merely on account of this depraved (disordered) nature; for we are in no sense the authors or causes of it; and a just God will not punish his creatures for acts which they did not perform. Children, therefore, who die in their infancy, having never merited punishment by personal guilt, will indubitably not be consigned to perdition. Moreover as the atonement which the Saviour made, embraces the whole world, it must also include children who are a part of it; . . . children, having not lost their title by voluntary unbelief, will for Christ's sake enjoy the benefit [of heaven] . . . that is, that at death their corruptible nature shall be transformed into an incorruptible . . .

. . . Strongly tempted by the solicitations of this depraved nature, which are however not irresistible, all men do, when they reach the years of moral agency, voluntarily indulge more or less in known sin, and thus, contracting personal guilt, expose themselves to the just displeasure of an offended God.[108]

Baptism, in addition to its being the initiatory ordinance into the visible church of Christ, is a symbolic and impressive exhibition of the doctrines of natural depravity, and the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore an important means of grace in the church.[109]

The Lord's supper is a symbolic and affecting exhibition of the facts of the atoning death of the Son of God, and of the various

[107] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

[108] *Ibid.*, pp. 127–128.

[109] *Ibid.*, p. 149. (A fuller discussion is found on pp. 197–228, *ibid.*, where the same views appear as given in *An Elementary Course of Biblical Theology, Translated from the Work of Professors Storr and Flatt, with Additions,* pp. 94–95.)

momentously interesting relations of that death to the moral government of the world, and the salvation of sinners.[110]

Regeneration . . . in the scriptures, designates the whole change . . . in this sense of the term, regeneration is a gradual work; because the entire change is never wrought instantaneously, and because the scriptures teach us, that we are regenerated mediately, and the use of means must necessarily be gradual. . . . It is also used by some religious writers, to designate a particular point in this progressive change.[111]

Although the churches advocated the retention of confession, they entirely changed its nature, and divested it of the objectionable features belonging to it in the Roman Catholic Church. . . . The rite of private absolution has however since been entirely rejected by the Lutheran church, and nothing but the following custom retained, viz. That on the day prior to the time of preparatory service, and sometimes also before and after the preparatory service itself, the intended communicants visit the pastor in his house, or some other suitable place, and give him an opportunity of conversing with them individually on their spiritual condition, and of recording their names in the sacramental register. . . . In some of our churches the above named visit of the people to the pastor for the purpose of private and personal interview with them, has become obsolete.[112]

Of Mass. On this subject, the language of the [Augsburg] Confession was less condemnatory than that which they soon after employed. In the Smalkald Articles, which were published seven years after this Confession, in 1537, Luther declares the papal mass to be a most momentous and abominable corruption, because it militates directly and powerfully against the fundamental doctrine (justification by faith in Jesus Christ.) . . .[113]

This theological work found a wide circulation.[114]

[110] S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *op. cit.*, p. 150. (The author, in an ampler discussion, follows closely, pp. 240–258, his views of the Lord's supper as published in his former work, *op. cit.* See *ante*, pp. 90–93.

[111] *Ibid.*, pp. 172–173.

[112] *Ibid.*, pp. 259–260.

[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 342–343.

[114] By 1860, a ninth edition, enlarged, appeared; "Before the edition had entirely passed through the press, orders were received for all

Some of the district synods gave it an official recognition in their convention proceedings.[115] The Hartwick Synod officially expressed its satisfaction with it by adopting the following committee report:

> Schmucker's Popular Theology is a recent work, and indicates great talent, a good judgment and a penetrating mind; exhibits sound doctrine and a clear and scriptural illustration of the subjects discussed. It ought to be the next in rank to the Bible in the library of every Lutheran.[116]

In a "Discourse in Commemoration of the Glorious Reformation of the Sixteenth Century" delivered by Professor S. S. Schmucker before the Synod of West Pennsylvania in 1837, he again frankly and publicly stated his view of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper:

> The Reformation has taught us to regard the ordinance not as a renewed sacrifice or mass; but as a mnemonic ordinance to commemorate the dying love of the Saviour, and to serve as a pledge of his *spiritual presence and blessing* on all worthy participants.[117]

This discourse was published by that district synod.

He was an indefatigable worker for the concrete realization of that constitutional principle of the Gen-

the copies, and a second will be commenced without delay."—*Ibid.*, preface, p. vi.

[115] *E. g.*, Synod of Maryland (*Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, of Maryland; Convened at Clearspring, Md., on the 19th, 20th, 21st of October, 1834*, p. 15); Synod of the West (*Proceedings of the Convention Held in Jeffersontown, Jefferson Co., Kentucky, Began October 11th*, A. D. *1834*, p. 2).

[116] *Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the Hartwick Synod and Ministerium of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York.—Convened in the Lutheran Church, Guilderland, Albany County, on the 6th–10th of September*, A. D. *1834*, pp. 12–13.

[117] *Discourse in Commemoration of the Glorious Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Delivered Before the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of West Pennsylvania*, S. S. Schmucker, D.D. Published by Synod. Fourth Edition, with Additions, pp. 39–40.

eral Synod which called upon its members to "be sedulously and incessantly regardful of the circumstances of the times, and of every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general, of whatever kind or denomination, in order that the blessed opportunities to heal the wounds and schisms already existing in the Church of Christ and to promote general concord and unity, may not pass by neglected and unavailing." [118]

To this end he found hearty support in the synod. Besides welcoming advisory delegates from other Protestant communions, such as the German Reformed (with which a plan of union had been under serious consideration),[119] Methodist, Presbyterian, United Evangelical Churches, the General Synod entered into fraternal relationship with the Bible Society of Philadelphia,[120] the American Tract Society,[121] the American Sunday School Union,[122] the Sunday School Union of the German Reformed Church,[123] the American Home Missionary Society,[124] the American Education

[118] See Section VIII, *ante*, p. 39.

[119] *Proceedings of the Seventh General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States—Convened at Baltimore, October, 1833*, p. 20.

[120] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church, in the United States.—Convened at Gettysburg, Pa., October, 1827*, p. 6.

[121] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church, in the United States.—Convened at Gettysburg, Pa., October, 1827*, p. 7.

[122] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Synod of the Ev. Luth. Church, in the United States. Convened at Hagerstown, Md. October, 1829*, pp. 7–8.

[123] *Proceedings of the Sixth General Synod of the Evan. Luth. Church in the United States.—Convened at Frederick, Md., Oct. & Nov., 1831*, p. 24.

[124] *Proceedings of the Ninth Convention of the General Synod of the*

Society,[125] the German Foreign Missionary Society,[126] and the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions.[127]

But not only within his own church did Professor S. S. Schmucker's leadership assert itself. His name became associated among the different Protestant churches, in America and in Europe, as the champion of church unity. In 1838, he proposed a definite platform of confessional union among Protestants which received favorable comment among many of the leading Protestant divines of that day. His *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles* contained the proposed new creed which he called the "Apostolic Protestant Confession". It consisted of two parts: (1) the "Apostles' Creed"; and (2) the "United Protestant Confession", which contained such doctrines from the different Protestant symbols as are held in common and which are to be considered as fundamental. These are: (1) the recognition of the Holy Scripture as the rule of faith and life; (2) belief in God and the Trinity; (3) belief in Christ as true God and man, a sacrifice for the sins of men; (4) the recognition of human depravity by reason of which man cannot become just before God without the influence of the Holy Spirit; (5)the conviction that man is justified by faith

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened at Hagerstown, Md., June, 1837, pp. 35, 44, 47.

[125] *Proceedings of the Ninth Convention of the General Synod*, etc., p. 45.

[126] *Ibid.*, p. 39. This Foreign Missionary Society "shall embrace all churches and individuals of German descent or association, in the United States."

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

alone, which results in good works; (6) the recognition that the church universal, under the gospel, is the visible Kingdom of the Lord—unity in the visible church does not imply a uniformity in rites or ceremonies; (7) the recognition of baptism and the Lord's supper as the only two sacraments: "signs and evidences of the divine disposition" toward men; *the one,* "ordained not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be . . . a sign of the covenant of grace, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life"; *the other,* "not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, but rather . . . a sacrament of . . . redemption by Christ's death"; (8) the disavowal of the Romish doctrines concerning purgatory, image worship, and invocation of saints; (9) the acknowledgment of the liberty of conscience in matters not contained in the "word"; (10) the conviction that church and state should remain separate, each to receive its due recognition; (11) the practice of fellowship and coöperation of the saints of God in Christ; (12) the belief in future judgment and retribution.[128]

These fundamental doctrines, forming the basis of

[128] "The Apostolic, Protestant Confession", pp. 129–135 in *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a plan for Catholic Union, on Apostolic Principles,* by S. S. Schmucker, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in the Theol. Sem. of Gen. Synod of the Lutheran Church, Gettysburg, Pa. Second Edition, Enlarged. The first 14 pp. in this edition contain expressions of approval by conspicuous American divines. The document is considered of such historical value and interest in the perennial discussions of proposals to church unity that the entire chapter dealing with the proposed plan is given in the Appendix. See APPENDIX A.

union, it is argued, do not prevent particular denominations, who recognize them as such, from maintaining their several distinctive doctrinal views and practices on a level of "minor differences" or of a non-fundamental character. Uniformity should not be made synonymous with unity.[129] The American Lutheran Church is a conspicuous example, the author points out, of the practical and effective way in which the general principles of the proposed plan have already worked:

> But the feasibility of this principle ought not to be regarded as problematical. The thing can be done, for it has been done, repeatedly, on a large scale, and in different churches. It has been acted on in the American Lutheran church for some time. About ten years ago, the writer, by appointment of the General Synod, drafted a Constitution for Synods, which has been adopted by a number of the Synods. Entertaining then, the views which he is now advocating, this constitution was made to require of candidates for licensure and ordination unconditional assent to the bible as the inspired word of God and only infallible rule of faith and practice, but only to the *fundamental* doctrines of the Augsburg Confession. The plan has worked well, decidedly well.[130]

This definite interdenominational platform received official recognition by the General Synod through the receipt of the following favorable report of a designated committee, appearing on the minutes of the synod in 1839:

> The Committee appointed to examine the "New Plan of Apostolic Protestant Union" by S. S. Schmucker, D. D. have given as much attention to the subject as their limited time permitted, and take pleasure in reporting:

[129] "Remedy for These Evils, or Plan for the Restoration of Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles", Chapter IV—*Ibid.*, pp. 87–128.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

That the design of the book appears to be, to promote union on apostolic principles among the several Protestant branches of the Christian Church.

The work is ably written, and bears strongly the marks of deep thought, extensive observation and anxious solicitude for the prosperity of Zion, and, if extensively and attentively read, cannot fail to promote the cause of Christian love and harmony of action in the Church of God. We accordingly find pleasure in recommending it to the members of this Synod, and indeed of all our Synods and Churches throughout our whole Church. We also beg leave to propose to the adoption of this Synod the following resolutions:

. . . *Resolved,* 1. That this Synod approve of the several features of the Plan of Union proposed in Prof. S. S. Schmucker's Appeal to the American Churches, and regard them as consistent with the principles of the New Testament.

. . . *Resolved,* 2. That this Synod recommend said Plan to the serious consideration of the several Synods connected with this body, and the Churches at large.[131]

[131] *Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened at Chambersburg, Pa., June, 1839,* p. 19.

CHAPTER IV

THE ISSUE BETWEEN "AMERICAN LUTHERANISM" AND "OLD LUTHERANISM"

During the period of the organization of the General Synod and including the first decade of its history, the Lutheran Church in America gained comparatively few new recruits from among those of the same denominational faith across the sea. It therefore had ample opportunity to develop a distinctive character in its land of political and religious freedom. In the second decade of its history, however, a large wave of immigration took place, and at once it became the special task for the churches to missionate among and to bring together these new-comers into their several synodical households. Over twenty times as many immigrants from Germany came during this second as over against the first decade in the history of the General Synod. The number steadily increased and by the end of the fourth decade, *i. e.*, 1860, had reached its height.[1]

[1] "The German immigration by decades, taken from the Census Reports, is as follows:

1821–30	6,761
1831–40	152,454
1841–50	434,626
1851–60	951,667
1861–70	787,468"

(p. 582—see below)

The earlier new-comers found Lutheran and Reformed churches in close fraternal touch.[2] Such a program already begun at the time of the organization of the General Synod (as pointed out earlier)[3] is suggestive of the movement launched in Germany in 1817 in the Prussian Union of Lutheran and Reformed churches. It became evident, however, that a large number of the companies of immigrants who came to these shores at the beginning of the flood-tide in the thirties were not satisfied in uniting with a German church, but sought company with such groups who leaned to a more distinct confessional character.

The Prussian Plan of Union had not met with entire satisfaction in Germany. Hardly had it come into being before a bold protest appeared in the form of Ninety-five Theses published by Pastor Claus Harms on the occasion of the tercentenary celebration of the Reformation in 1817. These theses, condemning the prevailing spirit of rationalism and unbelief and denouncing the union of the Lutheran and Reformed, sounded a trumpet-call to all true Lutherans to remain steadfast to their distinctive character and to return to their confessional position. A few of these

"The two decades 1841–60 present an increase in the German immigration. The high wave came between 1846–1854. Beginning with 57,500 German immigrants in one year the figures reached 215,009 for the year 1854. In the three years 1852–54 over five hundred thousand arrived, and during the nine years almost nine hundred thousand." —Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States, with Special Reference to its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence,* Vol. I, p. 585.

[2] Unity between the two communions which had been seriously agitated by several Lutheran district synods came up for review by the General Synod as late as 1833. See *ante,* p. 112, foot-note 119.

[3] *Ante,* pp. 42–51.

celebrated theses will illustrate the direction in which this nineteenth-century reformer was leading an ever-increasing following:

The following theses which are directed against all kinds of errors and confusions within the Lutheran Church, the writer is ready further to explain, to prove, defend and answer for. . . . He prays all true Lutherans . . . for their fraternal aid. . . .

2. . . . Protest and Reform must now be repeated.

3. With the idea of a progressive Reformation, as this idea is now conceived and preached, Lutheranism is reformed into Heathenism, and Christianity is reformed out of the world. . . .

9. The Pope of our time, our antichrist we may call in respect of faith, the Reason; in respect of action, the Conscience . . . Gog and Magog. . . .

15. Calixt who separated ethics from dogmatics set up the throne of majesty for conscience, and Kant who taught the autonomy of the conscience set it upon the throne. . . .

21. The forgiveness of sins cost at least money in the sixteenth century; in the nineteenth it is entirely free, for each one administers it to himself. . . .

32. The so-called religion of reason, is without reason, or without religion, or without both. . . .

50. Further: We have a sure Bible Word, unto which we take heed (2 Pet. 1: 19); and to guard against the use of force to turn and twist this like a weathercock we have our Symbolical Books. . . .

64. Christians are to be taught that they have the right not to endure anything un-Christian and un-Lutheran in the pulpits as well as in church and school books. . . .

66. The people cannot have confidence in overseers of the Church, many of whom are reputed not to have the faith of the Church. . . .

73. It were to be desired that in various Lutheran lands they might have the following text for a periodic sermon: Luke 15: 18: "I will arise and go to my father." This might prove very edifying to many a congregation which is perhaps suffering from hunger and care in the strange land of an erroneous faith. . . .

77. To say that time has removed the wall of partition between Lutherans and Reformed, is not a straightforward mode of speech. It is necessary to ask which fell away from the faith of their Church, the Lutherans or the Reformed? or both? . . .

78. If at the colloquy at Marburg, 1529, the body and blood of Christ was in the bread and wine, it is still so in 1817. . . .

83. Confusion with respect to the confessional writings,—which are nothing else than a definite, generally accepted explanation of Holy Scripture. . . .[4]

These theses brought about a bitter controversy [5] and served to draw "the attention of Lutherans to the Confessions and to the study of the same. The result of such study was opposition to the Union movements, devotion to the Confessions and the construction of a systematic theology, determined more or less by . . . the Confessions."[6]

The Prussian attempt at union between Lutherans and Reformed, together with the bold challenge from Pastor Harms and the cry which was raised for a return to the symbolical books of the church, elicited from that conspicuous and contemporary theologian, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, words of protest on the whole confusing situation. On the one hand, although favoring a union of these two Protestant bodies, Schleiermacher resented the way in which it was being effected. He was against the coercive measures on the part of the state, hoping that the Protestants would rise to a union by voluntarily submitting themselves to a simple faith in Christ upon which alone an effective unity could be based. On the other hand, he deplored the methods and aim of Harms

[4] "Theses of Claus Harms", pp. 512–514 in *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, edited by H. E. Jacobs, D.D., LL.D. . . . and J. A. W. Haas, B.D. With the Coöperation of Professor O. Zöckler, University of Greifswald, and Other European Scholars and Representative Scholars from the Various Synods.

[5] "About two hundred pamphlets were sent forth in reply."—James W. Richard, D.D., LL.D., *The Confessional History of the Lutheran Church*, p. 575.

[6] James W. Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 578.

looking to a return to the dogmatic conceptions of a former day. The rising tide of confessionalism, of which he was well aware, was to Schleiermacher a step backward to the age of scholasticism, and he added a vigorous protest to such a movement in the direction of the old orthodoxy.[7]

There followed in Germany, in the wake of bitter discussion, two definite and rival groups who found themselves at strict variance in their interpretation of the authority and value of the historic symbolical books of the church. These two groups became known as the Symbolists and the Anti-Symbolists. Dr. Richard has given a summary of the issue between the two contending groups as follows:

> The Symbolists affirm that the Symbolical Books are normated by the Holy Scripture, are clearer statements, sharper definitions of the doctrine of Scripture (in so far then norma normata).
>
> The Anti-Symbolists affirm that this is not the case.
>
> The Symbolists mean that the ministers shall be pledged to the Symbolical Books as norm of faith and norm of doctrine, because the Symbolical Books contain the doctrine of the Scripture.
>
> The Anti-Symbolists mean that the ministers shall not be pledged to the Symbolical Books as norm of faith and doctrine, because and inasmuch as the Symbolical Books go beyond the doctrine of the Scripture and in many points pass it by, and because each one, in a pledge to the Symbolical Books, naturally fixes his eye on the sentences and definitions in which is found a *deviation* from the simple doctrine of the Scripture.[8]

The antithesis between the two groups was furthered in Germany by the publication of magazines devoted

[7] *Cf.*, F. Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 128–129.

[8] James W. Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 579. Dr. Richard cites this quotation from p. 12 in *Symboliker und Antisymboliker. Worüber ist der Streit? Klar und deutsch beantwortet von Robert Gerhard, Pastor zu Schwoitsch, Diöces Breslau I*, 1843.

to disseminate the particular views among the people; by concerted efforts at organization; by the publication of Lutheran dogmatical treatises and, especially, by numerous editions of the Symbolical Books. In 1839, Pastor A. G. Rudelbach, a bitter opponent of the Prussian Union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, published an apologetic work in behalf of the distinctive doctrinal character of the Lutheran Church, entitled *Reformation, Lutherthum, und Union,* followed in 1841 by an *Introduction to the Augsburg Confession.*[9] "By his side, in principle, stood Guericke, professor at Halle, who in 1839 published a work on symbolics. At Breslau, in 1841, a Lutheran Synod was organized with special reference to the Confessions. Interest in the Confessions during the same period was promoted by the publication of numerous editions of the Symbolical Books (Schöpff, 1826; Hase, 1827; Meyer, 1830; Francke, 1846; Detzer, 1846; Müller, 1847; and others), some with and some without observations and introductions; and also by the lectures of Marheinecke in *Comparative Symbolics* in the University of Berlin, and by the publication of Köllner's *Symbolics* in 1837. During the same decades appeared many pamphlets which discussed, in one way and in another, the question of the authority and value to the Church of the Symbolical Books. Superintendents, professors and learned pastors took part in the discussions. Many argued that more significance should be attached to the Confessions at ordination than for a long time had been done. Some, however, took an opposite view. For a time the controversy was conducted

[9] Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 578.

with great vigor on both sides between Hengstenberg (after 1824, at Berlin) and Bretschneider, General Superintendent at Gotha. The former employed the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung,* and the latter the *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung,* as a medium of communication. The former contended for the abiding obligatoriness of the Confessions. The latter argued against such obligatoriness. Each represented a class, the Symbolists and the Anti-Symbolists, as they were then called."[10]

Various reasons are assigned as causes for the startling increase in German immigration to the United States: economic and political conditions at home[11] and the attraction of the newly opened territories in the Western part of the United States[12] which offered new advantages and better opportunities. Some of these immigrants, however, came to these shores, definitely, for religious reasons. Dissatisfied with the condition at home in the official program of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny and clinging to faith in the historic confessions of their church, in opposition to "unionism" and "rationalism", companies of Lutherans sought refuge in the new land.

Two settlements, important in the subsequent history of the Lutheran Church in America, were founded almost simultaneously in two widely separated local-

[10] Richard, *op. cit.*, pp. 578–579.

[11] See summary discussion on this point, pp. 583–586 in Vol. I, A. B. Faust, *op. cit.*

[12] "At the same period the American railroads were opening up the vast Western territories, and new states, such as Wisconsin, were making extraordinary efforts to attract German immigrants. The improvements in ocean travel made the journey shorter and cheaper, and better guarantees were now furnished for safe transportation."—Faust, *op. cit.*, pp. 585–586.

ities in this country: the one in and near Buffalo, New York, which became the nucleus of the Buffalo Synod, officially organized in 1845 and calling itself early the Synod of Exiles from the Lutheran Church of Prussia; the other in and near St. Louis, Missouri, which became and still is the headquarters of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States, one of the strongest organizations in the Lutheran Church in America to this day. Both of these new groups became known in Germany by the name "Separatists" and in America by the name "Old Lutherans".[13] Pastor Johannes Grabau, deposed and imprisoned in Germany for promulgating his views so boldly, set sail in 1839 with one thousand followers and organized that group of strictly confessional Lutherans sometimes called "Buffalites". Pastors Martin Stephan and the Walthers, together with a large following, set sail the same year from Saxony in five vessels and, arriving by way of the Gulf of Mexico up the Mississippi River, organized that group of strictly confessional Lutherans in America commonly called the "Missourians". C. F. W. Walther became the leader of this group; the father and organizer of a theological seminary at St. Louis; the first president of the new synod; the founder of two publications which vigorously set forth and defended the views of this body, *Der Lutheraner* in 1844 and the *Lehre und Wehre* in 1853, both publications enjoying a wide and popular circulation.[14]

[13] H. E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, p. 395—Vol. IV in the American Church History Series.

[14] For an account of the leadership and influence in Lutheran America of Pastor C. F. W. Walther, see pp. 152–161 in *The Lutheran Church*

These two companies of immigrants pledged themselves unequivocally to all the historic symbols of the Lutheran Church.[15]

The strictly confessional character of the Buffalo Synod may be seen in the constitution of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Buffalo, which was incorporated under the name "Old Lutheran Church":

Sec. 2. This congregation holds itself to the pure doctrine of the Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, as to the infallible Word of the living God and therefore as the only divine precept and rule of faith and life for all of its members.

Sec. 3. Inasmuch as the pure doctrine of the Holy Scripture is set forth and contained in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, namely: in the Apostolic, Nicene, Athanasian creeds, in the U. A. [Unaltered Augsburg] Confession of the year 1530, its Apology, the Schmalcald Articles, both the Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord, therefore the congregation adheres also to these confessions and holds itself thereunto as to the sum of pure doctrine according to which all other writings must be judged.[16]

The strictly confessional character of the Missouri Synod may be seen in the constitution framed by Pastor Walther for the Trinity Church in St. Louis, a model church constitution which appeared four years before the formal organization of that body:

Church-Order for the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the unaltered Augsburg Confession in St. Louis, Mo., 1843. . . .

in American History by Abdel Ross Wentz, Ph.D., D.D., with an Introduction by H. E. Jacobs, D.D., LL.D.

[15] They did not, however, join hands but carried on a most vigorous controversy in the interpretation of some of the doctrines in those confessions.

[16] Translated from *Verfassungsformen der Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas*, p. 107; Prof. Chr. Otto Kraushaar, Direktor a.D. des Wartburg-College zu Clinton, Iowa.

Sec. 3. In our congregations shall be recognized all the canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as God's revealed Word and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the extracted Form and Norm of the Word of God, according to which, since these are taken out of God's Word, not only the doctrines of our Church shall be held and examined but also all occurring doctrinal and religious disputes shall be judged and regulated. These are: the three Chief Symbols, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology to the same, the Schmalcald Articles, Dr. Luther's smaller and larger Catechisms, the Formula of Concord and the Visitation-Articles.

It is therefore allowed [that]

Sec. 4. No one may, moreover, become a member, still less an official of this congregation, nor have a share in the claims of a parishioner, other than he who: (a) is baptized; (b) holds himself to all the canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as to the only divine precept and rule of faith and life, and (c) is acquainted with, amidst indeed a present lack of knowledge of all the above mentioned Symbolical Books, at least the Augsburg Confession and the small Catechism of Luther, and holds himself thereto; . . .

Sec. 8. The incumbency in the congregation may be intrusted only to such a preacher who holds himself to all the canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments, as the revealed Word of God, and to all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church derived therefrom, of which § 3 has mentioned, upon which the same, as well as the schoolmaster, is bound by his calling.[17]

The Scandinavian immigration did not have any considerable effect on existing Lutheran bodies at this early period because of the small numbers who came [18] and the difference in its language. The Norwegians as early as 1825 had come to these shores, settling for the most part in Illinois and Wisconsin. The Swedes

[17] Translated from Prof. Chr. Otto Kraushaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

[18] "The great Scandinavian immigration was only at its beginning. From 1841 to 1850 the number of immigrants from Norway and Sweden is reported by the census as having been 13,903, and from 1851 to 1860, 20,931. Compared with the figure of 560,483 from 1881 to 1890, the number is indeed small . . ."—H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

joined themselves with the German-English speaking bodies in the West but did not assert themselves until later in the period. Both groups, however, brought with them strong confessional strains.

Newly organized synods sprang up and grew rapidly. No less than thirty-two such organized bodies of Lutherans made their appearance in a period of twenty years, between 1840 and 1860. Moreover, the older Lutheran bodies themselves received thousands of these recent German immigrants. As Dr. H. E. Jacobs has remarked, "It was manifestly impossible for the development within the portion of the Lutheran Church that had been planted by Muhlenberg to be unaffected by these new forces." [19]

The controversial writings which were appearing in Germany found their way to this country. Schmid's *Dogmatic Theology,* first published in 1843, "consisting of a copious selection of definitions from the Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, methodically classified",[20] was taken up and read by American Lutheran pastors.[21] Such writings, however, were in German. The first English translation of a conservative Lutheran dogmatics appeared in America in 1847. It was especially translated and edited for "our North American brethren" and sent to this country from a German press. The foreword by Rev. Loehe, minister in Bavaria, is significant:

> The attempt which is hereby made, to present to those of our countrymen, who have settled in North America, and to whom the

[19] H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 415. See accompanying Chart for names and dates of synods organized during this period.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 415–416.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

english language has become the means of communication, an english translation of the *Epitome Credendorum* . . . when we consider the great want which they must experience of such theological writings, the authors of which have had in view the maintenance, in all their parts, of all the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church. We are aware that, especially in more recent times, our North American brethren have shown a desire for making known to the clergy and laity of their adopted fatherland, the most approved lutheran authors; but we, on our part, are convinced that besides the symbolical writings, nothing would serve more to silence and shift the intricate manifestations of contending opinions, than an approved dogmatical work, in which every point of our faith is fully considered and represented agreeable to the true sense of scripture. He would have preferred it,—and indeed it would have been more honourable to our father-land—had we been able, instead of the work of *Hunnius,* to have selected one of a more recent date; but amongst the great number of writings of this nature, we have not been able to discover one, which was compiled in such a manner as would show more, that its Author was determined firmly to preserve all the doctrines of our confession. . . . It would be well if a great many of our brethren beyond the seas did but return to the views maintained in this work. . . . It is always with great pain that we read, that in any part of North America the hope of retaining german language and nationality is past; but we are far from believing that the *German Lutheran Church* is to stand or fall with the german language. And just this would be our only comfort, on seeing the german elements rapidly disappear from so many parts of North America, to see these our brethren more and more return to the full truth of the Lutheran Church, and, in another tongue, confess themselves of the same faith and of the same hope with us.[22]

The Henkelites, moreover, who had been prosecuting a return to the strictly confessional position,[23] set out

[22] Pages V–VIII by Rev. William Loehe, Minister of New Dettelsau, Bavaria, June 1847, in *Epitome Credendorum by the Rev. Nicolaus Hunnius, D.D., Late Rector at Leubeck, Germany. Containing a Concise and Popular View of the Doctrines of the Lutheran Church (First edited in 1625.) Translated from the German.* By Paul Edward Gottheil.

[23] See *ante,* p. 64 ff.

in the arduous task of translating the Symbolical Books, and succeeded in getting the first edition off the press in 1851. A second revised edition appeared three years later.[24] This edition (which added the names of such eminent American Lutheran divines as Dr. C. Philip Krauth of Gettysburg; Rev. W. F. Lehman, Professor of Theology in Columbus, Ohio; Dr. W. M. Reynolds, president of Capital University in Ohio; Drs. J. G. Morris and C. F. Schaeffer) gained a wide circulation and exerted a tremendous influence. Other works of the same character were circulated from the Henkel press.[25]

Parallel with the controversies in Germany, and the return of many to the historic traditions of the church, is to be noted a similar turn of affairs in America in about the third decade of the nineteenth century. Among the several Protestant denominations in this country, about this time, there began that return to a consideration of the particular traditions of the several churches and a resulting revival of a denominational consciousness which led, later in the period, to antag-

[24] *The Christian Book of Concord, or Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Comprising the Three Chief Symbols, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Smaller and Larger Catechisms, the Formula of Concord, and an Appendix. To which is prefixed an Historical Introduction. Trans. from the German.*

[25] *E. g., Luther's Smaller and Larger Catechisms, Together with an Historical Introduction; to Which Are Added the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and a Selection of Hymns and Prayers Adapted to Catechetical Instruction and Family Devotion;* First Edition, 1852; Second Edition, 1855. *Luther on the Sacraments; or the Distinctive Doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Respecting Baptism and the Lord's Supper; Containing a Sermon on Baptism, a Letter on Anabaptism, and his Larger Confession on the Lord's Supper*—translated from the German. 1853.

onisms and rivalry between the several groups within Protestantism.[26] Coöperation gave way to competition. Differences between the groups were again brought out to the foreground. Discords, divisions, schisms, and uncharitable disputes—in short, an "era of hard feeling"—became the order of the day.[27]

That the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America was awake to its home-missionary problems arising from the sudden increase in immigration is in evidence as early as the year 1839, when it was

Resolved, 1. That a special committee be appointed to open a correspondence with the companies of Lutherans recently arrived in the United States from Germany. . . .

2. That the committee write in the name of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, giving a sketch of the history and objects of this body, with any other intelligence which they may think it important to communicate.[28]

That Professor S. S. Schmucker of the General Synod's Theological Seminary was awake to the peculiar

[26] Speaking of this "Historical Revival" Dr. Wentz remarks: "The lively and ever-increasing interest in the study of Church History during this . . . period is a striking phenomenon and it is highly significant. A study of bibliographies reveals the fact that during the thirty years preceding 1830 only forty works on Church History appeared, while in the thirty years following 1830 over one hundred and fifty such works appeared. . . . It is remarkable, too, that denominational histories greatly outnumber the general works during this second period. This clearly indicates that in each denomination there was a vigorous development of its own historic life."—A. R. Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History*, p. 129. With an introduction by H. E. Jacobs.

[27] *Cf.* Chap. XVIII, "The Great Immigration", section entitled "Sectarian Competitions", pp. 328 ff.; *A History of American Christianity*, Leonard Woolsey Bacon. (American Church History Series.)

[28] *Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened at Chambersburg, Pa., June, 1839*, pp. 19–20. Dr. S. S. Schmucker was made a member of this committee.

problems arising from the character of this immigration, as well as the current movements in the American churches, is in evidence in two discourses delivered publicly by him in 1840 and 1841. These discourses were published and circulated by official sanction and may be taken as the first definite summary-expression of the movement, led by S. S. Schmucker, known as "American Lutheranism". It is true, that the confessional character of the movement was not new, for reference is continually made to the type of Lutheranism which, on the whole, had prevailed in America since the days of the Patriarch Muhlenberg. What becomes new is the *name* which is given to it as distinguishing its character from the rising tide of confessionalism in Germany and by way of recent arrivals to America. The views of the theological preceptor of the General Synod were widely known, both through his published works and through his utterances from the pulpit and chair. Although not holding all his theological views, the church, with the exception of the strictly confessional synods, such as Tennessee and Ohio, had not questioned his leadership nor his freedom to interpret the church's peculiar doctrinal views. However, it now became his special interest and task to save the church from being swept by the wave toward a stricter confessionalism, and this he does by defining the issues: on the one side "American Lutheranism", and on the other "Old Lutheranism".

Before the Synod of West Pennsylvania in October of 1840 Dr. S. S. Schmucker, in a well ordered and well prepared discussion, presented a summary view of Lutheranism and particularly the improved type which

had been crystallizing in America—under the title "Portraiture of Lutheranism".[29] This discourse is important and a review of it becomes necessary to the understanding of the movement, led by him, which forms the immediate background of the Definite Synodical Platform. True to his methodical way, he divides his discussion of Lutheranism into distinct topics: (1) The Origin of Lutheranism; (2) The Primitive Features of Lutheranism; (3) The Extension of Lutheranism; (4) The Progressive Development, or The Improvement of the Lutheran Church.

Introductory to his first topic is his characteristic emphasis on interdenominational fellowship and fraternity:

> The visible church of Christ . . . embraces not the members of any one denomination alone, but all of every land, of every name, and of every complexion, who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The members of this body of Christ sustain certain mutual relations of fraternity; and however in the providence of God, they have been permitted to adopt some diversities of external form and to entertain, as did the primitive disciples themselves, some minor differences of opinion, "they are bound to exercise holy fellowship and communion," not only toward those of their own house and denomination, but "as God offereth opportunity, unto all those in every place, who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus," and hold the cardinal doctrines of our common Christianity.[30]

In his discussion of the origin of Lutheranism, he voices his regret that the church of the Reformation

[29] "Portraiture of Lutheranism. A Discourse Delivered by Request, at the Consecration of the First English Lutheran Church in Pittsburg, Oct. 4, 1840, Before the Synod of West Pennsylvania, and Published by a Resolution of Said Body." This discourse is found on pp. 41–70 in the collection of six discourses published under the title, *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses*, S. S. Schmucker, D.D. (Fifth Edition)

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

should have attached to itself the name of particularism, "Lutheran", rather than the more catholic and characteristic name, "Evangelical"; and pays a special tribute to the Lutheran Fathers in Germany of the school of pietism:

> But the name officially adopted by the Lutheran reformers was that of the Evangelical church, that is, the gospel church, in antithesis to the legal ritual of the Old Testament, the very name recently adopted by the united Lutheran and Reformed church in Prussia. Luther himself, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, protested most decidedly against the use of his name as the Shibbolet of a sect, and it is to be regretted that his advice was disregarded.[31]

> No other foreign country is . . . fraught with such interesting and hallowed associations to the great mass of American Lutherans as Germany, the mother of the reformation, the cradle of Lutheranism, the land where our fathers proclaimed the gospel of salvation, where Spener sowed the seed of truth, where Arndt preached and wrote and lived his "True Christianity," where Franke wrought his works of love, and where, believing Luther poured his prayer of faith into the lap of God![32]

The primitive features of Lutheranism, as presented, are five: the first

> . . . . was the noble principle adopted by the Lutheran church, a principle which has the cordial assent of every Lutheran in the present day, and in regard to which our only regret is, that though it was adopted in theory by all the Protestant churches, not one of them had yet light and grace and charity enough consistently to practice it.[33]

Viz., that which Dr. Mosheim has pointed out:

> . . . that the holy scriptures are the only source, whence we are to draw our religious sentiments . . . and that these inspired writ-

[31] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

ings are, in all matters that are essential to salvation, so plain, and so easy to be thoroughly understood, that their signification may be learned, without the aid of an expositor, by every person of common sense. . . .

There are indeed certain formularies adopted by this church, which contain the principal points of its doctrine, ranged for the sake of method and perspicuity, in their natural order. But these books have no authority but what they derive from the scriptures of truth, whose sense and meaning they are designed to convey.[34]

The second primitive feature of Lutheranism consists of "the prominent doctrines" taught in the formularies of the church: first, the "Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Confession, by which the Lutheran church established her identity with the church of the apostolic and succeeding ages; and, secondly, the Augsburg Confession . . . the Apology or Defense of this Confession . . . the Smalcald Articles by Luther, and also his Catechisms",[35] formularies which are "subsidiary to the bible". These "prominent doctrines" "are none other than those commonly termed *the doctrines of the Reformation,* the doctrines which, with few variations, are held in common by all the so-called orthodox churches." [36]

First. The doctrine of the *trinity* of persons in one God-head . . .

Secondly . . . the *proper and eternal divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ* in all its amplitude. . . .

Thirdly. The *universal depravity of our race.* . . .

Fourthly . . . the *Atonement* . . . its vicarious nature and unlimited extent . . .

Fifthly . . . *Justification* . . . gratuitously, for Christ's sake, through faith . . .

[34] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 49–50. (Dr. Schmucker refers the quotation to p. 208, Vol. III, of Dr. J. L. von Mosheim's *Institutes of Eccles. Hist.*)

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Sixthly . . . Holy Life, or *Good Works,* "That this faith must bring forth good fruits" . . .

Seventhly . . . The *Ministerial Office* and the *Means of Grace . . .* "In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministerial office has been instituted, whose members are to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments". . . . For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, as means of grace, the Holy Spirit is given, who in his own time and place, produces faith. . . .

And, *finally . . . Future Judgment, and world of retribution. . . .*[37]

The third primitive feature of Lutheranism is its government; the fourth, its liturgical form of worship and observance of ecclesiastical festivals; the fifth, the practice of confirmation when the children, after religious instruction and at the age of discretion, confirm and assume the vows made for them at "the initiatory rite of baptism".[38]

In his discussion of the extension of the Lutheran Church, the author refers to that "indefatigable and talented servant of Christ," Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, as "one of the patriarchs of American Lutheranism."[39]

More pertinent to this discussion, however, are the author's remarks on "the progressive development or improvement of the Lutheran Church". In no uncertain terms, the strict confessionalism of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the closed system of that orthodoxy are denounced:

[37] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 50–52.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 52–56. Inasmuch as these features were not involved in the subsequent controversy, no further elaboration is here needed.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 57. He adds this interesting remark: "Had his [*i. e.*, Muhlenberg's] successors followed his noble example, and qualified themselves to preach in the English language wherever it was necessary, the Lutheran church would at this day be twice as numerous in this country as it is." (Pp. 57–58.)

Luther had wisely regarded the reformation as unfinished, and exhorted his followers to turn away from his works, and study the bible more attentively.[40] Unfortunately for the cause of truth and peace, the admiration of many of his followers, degenerated into excessive veneration; and death, which translated him to the abode of peace in heaven, made his writings, the source of rancorous contention on earth, imparted a kind of canonical authority to them. Moreover, as the church, established by his instrumentality, was designated by his name, his works gradually were regarded as the standards of orthodoxy, and all attempts to continue the work of reformation so gloriously commenced by him, were denounced as treason to his cause!! . . .

Had not the church been denominated by the name of this distinguished servant of Christ; had not his works but the bible been regarded as the grand source of religious light, as the grand subject of continued study; and had the Augsburg Confession alone been received as an auxiliary test; the church would have enjoyed much more peace, and the whole field of doctrine, except the few points determined in that confession, would have been open to free continued study and scrutiny in the light of God's word.[41]

The Lutheran Church has, however, since that day outgrown much of this former rigidity, developing and improving in the direction of holding itself merely to the more fundamental features of the Reformation. Seven such improvements are set down:

The *first* feature of improvement . . . is the *entire rejection of the authority of the Fathers in ecclesiastical controversy.* The grand mistake of the earlier reformers was their appeal to this authority. They were, indeed, enabled with these weapons, to overturn the corruptions introduced into the church after the rise of the papal hierarchy; but they also compelled themselves to retain such errors as were of earlier date. The writings of the fathers instead of being good authority for scripture doctrine, are

[40] The author adds this foot-note, from Luther: "I have not kept a list of my publications, nor have I all the works themselves; for I desire much rather that the Bible alone should be studied instead of my works."—Letter to Ursinus, 1527.

[41] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 59–60.

a perfect labyrinth of theological errors, from which it is impossible to escape with safety. . . . But it is easy to establish by the authority of Antenicene fathers, the several errors retained by the earlier reformers, and since rejected by the mass of Protestants.

In short it is a principle which the experience of ages has clearly established, that in all controversies about the proper doctrines, or duties, or forms of christianity, *the bible, the whole bible, and nothing but the bible,* must be the armor of the Protestant.[42]

Another feature of improvement in the Lutheran church consists in her *no longer requiring assent to the doctrine of the real presence of the Saviour in the eucharist.* On this subject her views have not unfrequently been misapprehended and misstated. It is indeed true, that she did entertain opinions on this topic different from the other churches. This difference was however by no means so great as is at present supposed by the less intelligent part of the community. Calvin and the early English reformers, employed language nearly, and in some cases, quite as strong as that found in the Lutheran symbols. The Augsburg Confession affirms, "that the body and blood of Christ are actually present (*vere adsint*), and the German copy adds, under the form or emblems of bread and wine are dispensed to the communicants." [Art. X.] Calvin employs language about as strong: he says in the *mystery* of the supper, by the emblems of bread and wine, Christ is really exhibited to us, that is, *his body and blood, in which he yielded full obedience,* in order to work out a righteousness for us; by which, in the first place, we may, as it were, coalesce into one body with him; and, secondly, being made partakers of the *substance* of himself, also be strengthened by the reception of every blessing.[43] In the Episcopal church, Cranmer, one of her earliest and ablest reformers, in the reign of Henry VIII., published his translation of the catechism of Justus Jonas, with amendments, in 1548, to

[42] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 60–61.

[43] (Reference is here made, and the Latin given, in a foot-note, to Calvin's Institutes: "Dico igitur in cœnæ *mysterio* per symbola panis et vini Christum vere nobis exhiberi, adeoque corpus et sanguinem ejus, in quibus omnem obedientiam pro comparanda nobis justitia adimplevit: quo scilicet, primum, in unum corpus cum ipso coalescamus; deinde participes substantiæ ejus facit, in bonorum omnium communicatione virtutem quoque sentiamus."—*Institut. Lib.* IV. c. XVII. 11.)—Foot-note on pp. 61–62, S. S. Schmucker, *op. cit.*

which he professed to adhere till his death,[44] and in which he uses this language: "Christ saith of the bread 'this is my body;' and of the cup he saith 'this is my blood.' Wherefore we ought to believe that in the sacrament we receive truly the body and blood of Christ. For God is almighty; he is able, therefore, to do all things what he will." His friend and fellow martyr, Ridley, at his last trial says: "I agree that the sacrament is the very true and natural body and blood of Christ, even that which was born of the Virgin Mary, which ascended into heaven, which sitteth on the right hand of God. . . ." It is admitted, these same writers professed to mean a spiritual presence, and so did also the Lutheran reformers, who explicitly [so] declare in the *Formula Concordiæ*. . . .[45]

At the present day, it is pretty generally agreed by Protestants, that to talk of the *spiritual* presence of a *material* body, or the *spiritual* eating and drinking of a *material* body and blood, is to employ language that conveys no distinct ideas. We, however, cheerfully concede that the other Protestant denominations relinquished these views of their early reformers, more speedily and with less controversy than did the Lutheran church. . . .

At the present day, whilst some shades of difference exist in the Lutheran church, all are permitted to enjoy their opinions in peace, and the most general received view, if we mistake not, is: "That there is no presence of the glorified *human* nature of the Saviour, either substantial or influential; nor anything mysterious or supernatural in the eucharist; yet, that whilst the bread and wine are merely symbolic representations of the Saviour's absent body, by which we are reminded of his sufferings, there is also a special *spiritual* blessing bestowed by the divine Saviour on all worthy communicants, by which their faith and Christian graces are confirmed.[46] [47]

The *third* item of improvement is the relinquishment of a much abused custom connected with the preparation for communion. The reformers and their successors had substantially repudiated as

[44] Reference is made to Cranmer's works, II, 440; III, 13, 279, 344; and to Hook's Discourse, p. 96.

[45] Reference is made to the passage from the Formula Concordiæ, Art. VII, No. 21, cited in a foot-note. *Cf.*, *ante*, p. 92, foot-note 55.

[46] This view is a reiteration of that presented in his *An Elementary Course of Biblical Theology*. *Cf.*, *ante*, pp. 90–93; especially p. 92; also, *cf.*, pp. 109–110, foot-note 110.

[47] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 61–63.

unscriptural and corrupting what constituted the essential features of Romish *private confession,* namely: the pretence that the priest is in the place of God; that every individual sin, even the secret thoughts and feelings of the heart must be individually detailed to the priest, as essential to pardon; and that the priest possesses the absolute power to forgive these sins. Yet the reformers deemed it useful, that before communion, each communicant should have a private interview with the pastor, and give him an account of the state of his soul, and his progress in the divine life; in order that the minister might give him instruction and advice, and if the case warranted it, encourage the applicant with the promise of pardon from God. This custom, in order to give as little offense as possible, they denominated, though very inappropriately, confession. They had rejected the thing, and therefore it would have been more consistent not to retain the name. Yet, against this custom, it would be difficult to allege any valid objection, except its misapprehension and consequent abuse by the ignorant. . . . But even this custom has been almost entirely abandoned, and the preparation for communion consists in a public preparatory discourse, public and united confession of sins, and rehearsal of the promises of divine mercy, similar to the preparatory exercises of other churches. . . . This formal annunciation of the divine promise of forgiveness, thus conditionally made, is edifying to intelligent minds. . . . Yet as it is easily perverted into *certain* pardon by the less informed, who may erroneously conceive themselves penitent, and as the scriptures contain no special promise of pardon at communion, more than in the performance of any other duty; the utmost caution should be observed. . . .[48]

The *fourth* item of *improvement* is the entire rejection of every remnant of papal superstition in the administration of baptism. The Romanists maintain, that unbaptized persons are possessed by evil spirits, and that the priest possesses the power by adjuration to expel them. This ceremony, termed exorcism, is performed by the priest with a multitude of formalities. Luther, and the other early reformers, rejected both these principles; yet retained some kind of adjuration as a symbolic acknowledgment of the natural depravity of all men. To this they were probably led by their lingering regard for the early fathers. . . . Yet many of our churches were from the beginning unwilling to retain the semblance

[48] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.

of this ceremony, even as a declaration of natural depravity, and accordingly it was totally rejected from the liturgy and directory for worship published at Augsburg seven years after the celebrated diet of that place, namely in 1537 . . . and in many others. In different kingdoms it was long since wholly rejected, whilst in others, phraseology more or less resembling it was long retained.[49]

The *fifth* item of improvement in the Lutheran church is the more *systematic adjustment of her doctrines.* Luther was so incessantly employed in the great work of reforming the church from the corruptions and superstitions of Rome, that he had little leisure for abstract reflections on the reciprocal relations of the scripture doctrines, and on the entire and minute consistency of his views with each other. It is certain that in the earlier part of his life he believed the Augustinian view of predestination. His work, on the Bondage of the Will, published in 1525, must put this question to rest. But he at the same time entertained other views inconsistent with this. Melancthon, who had embraced Luther's unadjusted views of doctrine, led the way in the process of harmonizing their conflicting elements. . . . During the reign of infidelity in Europe . . . the doctrines of great reformers were forsaken by many. But thanks be to God, the cause of truth is again prospering . . . in the Lutheran church in this country the great doctrines of the reformation are taught as universally as in any other denomination of Christians in our land.[50]

The *sixth* feature of improvement is the adoption of a more regular and rigid system of church government and discipline in this country. The union between church and state has prevented the adoption of an independent and thoroughly scriptural discipline in the Lutheran, as well as in all the other established churches in Europe. . . . In this country our General Synod has adopted and recommended a system, which, it is believed, contains all the prescriptions of the Saviour and his apostles and all that appeared most valuable in the systems of the different other churches. . . . Our General Synod is wholly an advisory body. . . .[51]

[49] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

The *last* item of improvement . . . is the practice of the Lutheran church in this country, not to bind her ministers to the minutiæ of any human creed. The bible and the belief that the *fundamental doctrines* of the bible are taught in a manner substantially correct in the Augsburg Confession, is all that is required. . . . A written creed . . . seems necessary to the purity of the church. . . . For several hundred years after the days of the apostles, no other creed was used in the whole church than that called the Apostles' Creed. . . . This creed embodied only the cardinal doctrines of the gospel. . . . By what authority . . . did the several Protestant denominations after the Reformation adopt creeds ten, and some of them, a hundred times as long as that used in the earlier ages, and require assent to these interminable instruments as a condition of admission to their churches? The bible certainly confers no such authority. . . . Have they not . . . been the occasion of endless strife in all the churches adopting them? . . . It is a matter of historical certainty, that the orthodox denominations of the present day coincide as much in doctrinal views, as did the Christians in the golden age of Christianity. If they could walk together in love, and their minor differences created no difficulty then; why should not Christians in the present day unite in the same manner. . . . The duty of all parts of the Christian church seems therefore to be, to return to the use of shorter doctrinal creeds as tests of ecclesiastical, ministerial, and sacramental communion. This noble course the Lutheran church has already virtually taken, by requiring assent only to the fundamental doctrines of the Augsburg Confession. . . . Happy, thrice happy . . . is the Lutheran church, that she, who was first to cast off the yoke of Roman superstition and oppression, should lead the way in breaking the bonds of Protestant sectarianism. . . .[52]

The second discourse,[53] that of 1841, delivered before the convention of the General Synod, is a historical résumé of Lutheranism in the United States.[54] Here

[52] S. S. Schmucker, "Portraiture of Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 67–69.

[53] See *ante*, pp. 130–131.

[54] "Retrospect of Lutheranism in the United States. A Discourse Delivered before the General Synod at Baltimore, 1841; And Published by Said Body for Gratuitous Distribution". This discourse is found on pp. 11–40 in the collection of six discourses published under the title, *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and*

"American Lutheranism" is traced back to its German source: that distinct school of pietists at Halle which assumed the responsibilities of a missionary program in North America in the early eighteenth century;[55] and to its American protagonist, "the venerable patriarch of American Lutheranism, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg".[56] The main thesis of the whole discourse is to show *that* background of "*practical piety* of our fathers";[57] that spirit of wholesome evangelism which was "not unworthy of the age in which their lot was cast, the age of Edwards, of Whitefield, of Wesley";[58] that reincarnation, on American soil, of the "heavenly spirit" which characterized the school of Francke;[59]—all of which is the peculiar heritage of the American Lutheran Church. This discourse was a tactful presentation of the generic character of the type of Lutheranism which S. S. Schmucker was ready to defend and promulgate, as against that type of Lutheranism which, having its background in the sixteenth and seventeenth century confessional orthodoxy, was taking on a new lease of life.

As might have been expected, an antithesis of these two types developed with the succeeding years into more definite and distinct schools. A consciousness

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[55] (Halle's part in "planting the church" has been reviewed, *ante,* p. 4 ff.) Halle is spoken of in this discourse as "the mother of our central American church, the alma mater of Muhlenberg, of Handschuh Heinzelman, Schultz, of Bager, of Voigt, of Krug, of Helmuth, of Schmidt and others".—Schmucker, *op. cit.,* p. 28.

[56] *Ibid.,* p. 14.

[57] *Ibid.,* p. 36.

[58] *Ibid.,* p. 36.

[59] *Ibid.,* p. 19.

that there were real differences grew into antagonisms on both sides. The period which follows, up to the publication of the *Definite Synodical Platform* in 1855, saw the leading ministers of the church of the Patriarch taking sides. It soon developed into an issue. The air of uncertainty was cleared up for many through published articles in the various church organs. The *Lutheran Observer,* begun in 1831 by Dr. J. G. Morris of Baltimore and edited by Dr. Benjamin Kurtz from 1833 to 1861, became the forum of expression for the various conflicting views which were taking shape. This magazine, under the editorship of Dr. Kurtz, a lifelong friend of Dr. S. S. Schmucker,[60] became the vigorous spokesman for the type of Lutheranism which had been championed by the Gettysburg professor. The *Lutheran Standard,* begun in 1843 at Columbus, Ohio, became the organ of that type of Lutheranism which had been planted in that section of the country by the missionary Paul Henkel[61] and which found rich and well prepared soil for the thousands of German immigrants who settled in that promising territory "towards the west". The *Missionary,* begun in 1848 by Dr. Passavant of Pittsburgh, and the *Evangelical Review,* begun in 1849 at Gettysburg, both championed the return of Lutheran America to a more adequate appreciation of the historic confessions.

[60] Dr. Benjamin Kurtz became early associated with Dr. S. S. Schmucker in establishing the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The General Synod in 1825 elected him to be agent for this institution with instructions to solicit funds and books in Europe. See p. 7 of *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States; Convened at Frederick, (Md.) October, 1825.*

[61] *Ante,* pp. 64–65.

In 1850 at the convention of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the Mother Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, the discussion broke out on the open floor. It gives evidence that the wave toward confessionalism was not confined to the Western States, where it was assuming great proportions, but that it became an issue in the East, among the older Lutheran bodies. One of the district conferences of this Ministerium brought the whole question before the body at this convention.

> The Conference desired that the Synod should give an expression of opinion in regard to the Symbolical Books, and especially with reference to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. This opened a wide field for discussion. A number of the brethren embraced this opportunity of expressing their opinions upon this subject. All spoke freely, and after the matter had been discussed for some time in a kind and harmonious spirit, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:
>
> *Resolved,* That, like our fathers, we regard ourselves as a part of the one and only Evangelical Lutheran Church, that we too acknowledge the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures as the only ground of our faith, and that we too have never renounced the confessions of our church, but continue to regard them as a faithful exposition of the divine word.[62]

The growing number of German immigrants to this country brought three synods together in the publication of a common German Liturgy—the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the New York Ministerium, and the Synod of Ohio.[63] The revised edition of this Liturgy,

[62] *Proceedings of the One Hundred and Third Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States, Convened in Pottsville, Schuylkill County, Pa., May 26–29, 1850,* p. 12.

[63] *Liturgie und Kirchenagende für die Evangelisch-Lutherischen*

proposed by the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1850[64] in coöperation with the other two bodies, published five years later, contains this significant pledge to the Confessions of the Church on the part of the candidates for ordination:

> I hereupon now ask you, dear brethren in the Lord, before the presence of God and our Lord Jesus Christ as well as before this entire Christian assembly: . . . Are you willing to preach according to the true understanding the same as is expressed in the Confessional Writings of our Church . . . ? . . .
>
> The ordained hereupon declare: (one after the other) Yes, with all heart we [do] whereto God is willing to grant the power and grace of his Spirit! Amen.[65]

The German Pennsylvania Ministerium carried on a special fraternal relationship with the German Synod of Ohio, strongly recommending the official magazine of that body:

> *Resolved,* That we again recommend to the many friends of the "Lutheran Standard",[66] published by our Sister Synod of Ohio, that they exert themselves to increase its circulation. . . .[67]

The confessional position of this "our Sister Synod of Ohio" is seen in the model constitution for the individual congregations, adopted by this body, and in force within its jurisdiction:

Gemeinden in Pennsylvanien, Neu York, Ohio und den benachbarten Staaten. 1842.

[64] See foot-note 62 above.

[65] Translated from *Liturgie und Agende: ein Kirchenbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten. Herausgegeben mit Kirchlicher Genehmigung,* p. 346. See also *ibid.,* p. 341. 1855.

[66] *Ante,* p. 143.

[67] *Minutes of the 104th Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States.—Convened in Allentown, Leheigh County, Pa. June 15–19, 1851,* p. 27.

CHURCH-DISCIPLINE FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION OF THE _____ CHURCH

Chapter I. Concerning the Teachers.

Article 1.

The duties of the teachers are chiefly the following: to preach the Gospel and to expound the Word of God according to the doctrines of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. . . .[68]

The Joint Synod of Ohio, in 1854, amended its constitution to read:

This Synod shall be composed of representatives from all Ev. Lut. [sic] Synods, now united in the existing Synod of Ohio, and such other Synods as may from time to time adopt this Constitution, and with us adhere to the doctrines of the word of God as set forth in all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, or who in their own Constitution confess and maintain the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's smaller Catechism in the sense and spirit of the other symbols.[69]

When, in 1853, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, after thirty years of solitude,[70] again joined the General Synod, it did so carefully guarding its peculiar rights. This resolution is here set down inasmuch as it became the subject of violent controversy in the subsequent history of the Lutheran Church in America:

Resolved, That this Synod regards the General Synod simply as an association of Evangelical Lutheran Synods, entertaining the same views of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as these are expressed in the Confessional writings of our Evangelical

[68] Translated from *Protokoll der Sechszehnten Sitzung der Synode und des Ministeriums der Ev. Lutherischen Kirche in dem Staate von Ohio.—Gehalten zu Zelienopel, Butler Co., Pennsylvanien, am Trinitatis-Feste und folgenden Tagen, im Jahr des Herrn 1833,* p. 38.

[69] *Minutes of the Ninth Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Adjacent States, Convened at Greensburg, Penna., from November 9th to 14th, 1854,* pp. 6–7.

[70] *Ante,* pp. 43–44.

Lutheran Church, and especially in the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession,* and that we advert to the fact, that the General Synod is denied the right by its Constitution, of making any innovations or alterations of this faith. . . .

Resolved, That this Synod in its union with the General Synod, retains its own Constitution and form of government, and also the right to regulate its own internal affairs as previous and heretofore.

Resolved, That we neither intend nor ever expect, that the principles which have hitherto governed our Synod in respect to church doctrine and church life shall suffer any change whatever by our connection with the General Synod; but that, should the General Synod violate its Constitution and require of our Synod or any Synod, as a condition of admission or of continuation of membership, assent to anything conflicting with the old and long established faith of the Evangelical Lutheran church, then our delegates are hereby required *to protest against such action,* to withdraw from its sessions, and to report to this body.

Resolved, That we again earnestly request the Synod of Ohio, and all other Evangelical Lutheran Synods that are not yet connected with the General Synod, to accede to the desire of the General Synod, to join us in uniting with it on the same principles. . . .[71]

This Synod brought into the company of the General Synod not only a large constituency (88 clergymen, 244 congregations with a communicant membership of 32,079),[72] but a strong conservative force which was destined to be felt in that larger body. The same convention which decided to unite into the larger organization adopted unanimously the following preamble and resolutions offered by Rev. W. J. Mann, one of the leading clergymen of that body:

[71] *Minutes of the 106th Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States—Convened in Trinity Church, at Reading, Berks County, Pa., on the First Sunday after Easter, the 3rd to the 7th of April* A. D. *1853,* p. 18.

[72] *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States—Convened in Winchester, Va., May 21, 1853,* p. 37.

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran church has, of late, arrived at clearer views of its doctrinal and other distinctive features; and Whereas, we are justified in expecting that both, the internal and external welfare of our church will be thereby essentially promoted; and, Whereas, we recognize the importance of a historico-confessional basis for the church; therefore, *Resolved:*

(A) That we also, *in common with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our Fathers,* acknowledge the collective body of the Symbolical Books, *as the historico-confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* and that we also, like the Evangelical Lutheran Church of former times, accord to *the unaltered Augsburg Confession* and *Luther's Small Catechism,* an especial importance among our Symbolical Books generally.

(B) *Resolved,* That we enjoin it on all the Ministers and Candidates of our church as their duty to make themselves better and more thoroughly acquainted with these venerable documents of the faith of our fathers, than has hitherto been the case with many.

(C) *Resolved,* That it is not by any means our intention hereby to diminish the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures, but much rather to place them in the clearest light possible, and that we by no means design through these Symbols to place constraint on the consciences of any, but much rather through them to bind the conscience to the Holy Scriptures as the divine Source of Truth.[73]

It is evident that the Mother Synod of 1853 had turned its face in a new direction from that taken in its revised constitution of 1792,[74] which still obtained at the organization of the General Synod in 1820.[75]

Reference has already been made to the Synod of New York joining with the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the Synod of Ohio in a joint liturgy.[76] This seems

[73] *Minutes of the 106th Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States—Convened in Trinity Church at Reading, Berks County, Pa., on the First Sunday after Easter, the 3rd to the 7th of April* A. D. *1853,* pp. 31–32.

[74] *Ante,* p. 21 ff.

[75] *Ante,* p. 34 ff. *Cf.* the *Plan Entwurf* of 1818 and the Constitution of the General Synod of 1820. *Ante,* pp. 36–39.

[76] *Ante,* pp. 144–145.

startling in view of the character of this body under the long leadership of Dr. Quitman,[77] and of the charge of S. S. Schmucker, in his student days, that in this body "the majority of the preachers are rank Socinians".[78] But a reaction is again in evidence in the East even here. The strong wave of German immigration was throwing the weight of its influence in this second oldest of the Lutheran bodies in America. The process was slower than that in Pennsylvania, yet it was being felt. A visiting delegate to this body in 1855 in his remarks "alluded to the increasing German element of the Ministerium";[79] bearing out the significant statement in the president's report three years before:

> I regret that for a year or two comparatively so little has been done amongst us in the work of church extension. One great difficulty is in the want of pastors, especially those who speak the English language.[80]

A typical example of the growing wave toward confessionalism is to be seen in the charges made during this period against a newly formed synod in the State of New York which had been organized as early as 1837 under the name of "The Franckean Synod". This body of Lutherans had come together under a constitution which asserted its doctrinal position simply by

[77] *Ante*, p. 25 ff.

[78] *Ante*, p. 77.

[79] *Minutes of the Sixtieth Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and Adjacent States and Countries, Held at Churchtown, Columbia County, N. Y. Commencing Saturday, September 1st and ending Wednesday, September 5th, 1855*, p. 27.

[80] *Minutes of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York, and Adjacent States and Countries, Held at Red Hook, Dutchess Co., N. Y., August 28th to Sept. 1st, 1852*, p. 32.

acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme Head of the church, and the Word of God as the sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. . . .[81]

with no mention of any of the historical confessions of the church. Such a doctrinal basis was not new, in the light of the history of the American Lutheran bodies, but it was decidedly against the spirit of the times. This body was charged "as having left the Lutheran connexion—as being a new sect—that . . . [it] . . . had abandoned the Lutheran doctrines and government, and formed a New Confession of Faith."[82] Charged with having renounced the Augsburg Confession, because that confessional statement had not been officially recognized, it simply returned the answer nonchalantly:

> Where in all our proceedings is there one word found about or against the Augsburg Confession? . . . We have waged no war against that instrument. We have left it where it is and just as it is. And we do deny that we have *formed* any thing in its *stead,* or as a substitute for it. The declaration of faith, published by this Synod, contains doctrines plainly revealed in the Bible, and so far as the Augsburg Confession agrees with the Bible, so far it agrees with our declaration.[83]

When this body applied for admission into the General Synod, in 1864, it threw that body into a violent storm and upheaval because of its "too general" doc-

[81] *Proceedings of a Convention of Ministers and Delegates from Evangelical Lutheran Churches, in the State of New York. Convened in the Chapel, in Fordsbush, Montgomery County, May 24, 1837*, p. 5. The Constitution together with the eleven "Declarations of Faith" are printed in full on pp. 5–12.

[82] See the president's address, *Journal of the Special Meeting of the Franckean Synod of the Evangelic Lutheran Church, Convened at Richmondville, Schoharie County, N. Y., October 5th, 1837*, p. 24.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

trinal basis. Delegates from the Pennsylvania Ministerium, which for so many years had for its constitution a doctrinal basis similarly less specific as that of the Franckean Synod, protested and withdrew —opening the rift which finally led to the first great schism in the Lutheran Church in America.[84] The wave toward confessionalism of the strictest character had by that time reached overwhelming proportions. The Franckean Synod was running off-schedule from the rapid change of the times.

It must not be supposed, however, that the transition, so marked in this period, was easy. Voices, other than that of Professor S. S. Schmucker, were heard. As in all issues, contrary opinions obtained. Some outstanding published opinions, falling in line with those of the Gettysburg professor, may be here noticed.

Dr. Ernest L. Hazelius, a leading member of the South Carolina Synod and professor in its theological school at Lexington, in a published commentary on the Augsburg Confession in 1841, which was unanimously approved by that body,[85] wrote the following concerning Article X, "Of the Lord's Supper":

> That Luther and the Reformers, who labored with him entertained the idea of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is undeniable, but it is also well known, that the sentiments of Luther

[84] A review of this turbulent convention, an interesting chapter in itself, does not enter into the present discussion. See the *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States—Assembled in York, Pa. May, 1864.*

[85] *Extracts from the Minutes of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod & Ministerium, of South Carolina & Adjacent States, Convened at Sandy Run Church, Lexington District, S. C. On Saturday the 9th of November, 1839, and Continued Its Sessions of the 11th, 12th & 13th,* p. 11.

concerning the real presence of Christ in the Supper have not always been fully received in the Lutheran church. Melanchthon departed from them, and many of our divines of the 17th century, otherwise strict adherents to the doctrines of Luther, moderated the expressions of the great reformer in such a manner, that few Protestant Christians of any other denomination could well find fault with their explanation of the manner, in which they represented to themselves and taught the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. . . .

The opinions now generally entertained in the Lutheran church as to the nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper differ in no material point from those entertained by the other protestant churches on the same subject. We believe, that Christ instituted this sacrament as a means of spiritual communion with him, as the invisible head of the church, and which is to be statedly observed, until the saints are admitted to personal communion with him in heaven. In it, the Christian commemorates with devout feelings, the sufferings and death of Christ. By means of this ordinance the Christian renews his faith, and receives the spiritual blessing, which the Saviour has promised to impart to all worthy communicants. The body and blood of Christ are set forth in this ordinance as the spiritual food of the soul. . . .

If however any of our brethren should entertain sentiments, apparently more conformable to the views and language held forth in the Augsburg Confession and other writings of the first reformers, we do not desire or wish to disturb him in that opinion, in as much as we know, that the main point in this as well as in every other religious observance, is the heart; if this is hungry and thirsty after the blessings which Christ will impart to the believer in this sacrament, he may rest assured, *that* blessing shall be his, whatever may be his individual view of the mode of communion with Christ at his table. For however much individual professors or churches may differ as regards minor and non-essential features in the Christian system, all agree in professing one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Around the table of their common Lord and master, they may meet in the hallowed exercise of Christian love. At the table of Christ they may forget their minor differences, and commune in sweet and endearing fellowship with each other and their Lord.[86]

[86] *Discipline, Articles of Faith and Synodical Constitution, as Adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent*

That Dr. Hazelius was frankly departing from a literal acceptance of the Augsburg Confession is attested to by his "General Reflections" on that Confession:

> If, therefore, every departure from the literal sense of the Augsburg Confession, amounts to a deriliction of Lutheranism, it is certainly a source of congratulation and joy, to those who have thus departed, that Luther and Melanchthon have set them the example. These heroes of the Reformation never intended, that Christians should follow them in all respects, for even they differed among themselves in regard to some opinions concerning the Lord's Supper; but they demanded, that Christians should prayerfully study the bible, and consider the authority of that book as paramount to all human wisdom and philosophy.
>
> On this broad basis of Protestantism, the American Lutheran churches are still standing; charitable and liberal in matters of minor importance, they are willing to aid in levelling down the partition walls, which are now separating Protestant from Protestant.[87]

For his view of baptism as merely "the solemn assurance and pledge on the part of God", see his later work.[88]

Dr. John Bachman, who served the General Synod as president in 1837, and whose name appears on important committees of that body, a leader in his own Synod of South Carolina, published a sermon which he had preached before his body, in which he takes a stand similar to that of Professor S. S. Schmucker.

States, in Synod Assembled. To Which is Added a Liturgy and Some Forms of Prayer for Families and Individuals—Published by Order of Synod, pp. 20–23.

[87] *Discipline, Articles of Faith and Synodical Constitution*, etc., pp. 55–56.

[88] *A History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time.—In Four Volumes—Volume I. Containing the History of the Church during the First and Second Centuries*, pp. 206–220. By Ernest L. Hazelius, D.D., Prof. of Theology in the Theol. Sem. of the Luth. Synod of S. C.

This sermon was officially approved by the Synod of South Carolina and received favorable comment.[89] [90] The Augsburg Confession is the chief topic of the discourse and receives the following comment:

> With regard to the majority of the doctrines contained in the Augsburg Confession, nearly all Orthodox Protestants agree with us, and have adopted our sentiments. . . . A few of our articles, however, have been misrepresented, or are misunderstood, and require from us no concealment, but a fair and candid expression of the sentiments of the church.[91]

Provoked by the continued attacks on the part of the Henkelites [92] in the South, that many Lutherans had departed from their scriptural views as taught in their confession, Dr. Bachman takes up in the same discourse for special discussion three of these special doctrines insisted on by these "defenders of the faith":

> They chose as a leader an individual by the name of Hinkel, (hence are called Hinkelites,) a weak and illiterate man, whose ground of dissent, as far as can be gathered from the crude, visionary and inflammatory publications, which have from time to time appeared, either under his name or that of his sect, was that the Evangelical Church had departed from the true doctrines of the reformation, which he and his Church attempted to restore. . . . Those doctrines which they profess to have derived from the Lutheran Church . . . may be classed under the three following

[89] *Extracts from the Minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium, of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened at St. John's Church, Charleston, S. C. On Saturday the 11th Nov., 1837, and Continued Its Sessions on the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Inst.*, pp. 8–9.

[90] *A Sermon on the Doctrines and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Preached at Charleston, S. C. November 12th, 1837, by Appointment of the Synod of South-Carolina, and Adjacent States*, John Bachman, D.D., President of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States.

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[92] See *ante*, p. 64 ff.

heads: 1st, that baptism is regeneration. 2nd, that in the Lord's supper the elements become the actual flesh and blood of Christ; and thirdly, that the participation of the sacraments entitles us to salvation.

These sentiments, so directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ, and the express declaration of the Reformers, and fraught with so much evil, were immediately denounced by all the members of our Church as unscriptural, and not warranted by any article in our creed. No Synod in our country has ever acknowledged, or given countenance, to this sect. . . .[93]

1st. Then let us inquire whether the holy Scriptures anywhere inculcate the belief that baptism is regeneration. . . .

. . . When men became converted to the Christian religion they were admitted by water baptism as members of the Church of the Redeemer. But the water which was used was only an emblem of the Holy Spirit. . . . Something more was necessary, and our Saviour taught Nicodemus, that in order to be prepared for the invisible Kingdom of God, he must be born of the Spirit—his heart must be converted to God by the divine influences from above. If baptism alone was regeneration why does the Saviour lay such stress on the necessity of a new birth, as effected by the Holy Spirit? . . . The following passage contained in Paul's Epistle to Titus, 3rd chapter, 5th verse, has also been brought forward as evidence in favor of their doctrine. "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." If these words have reference to the ordinance of baptism, they can only mean that baptism which Christ has established in his Church, is symbolical of that change of the heart which is necessary to salvation. . . . We find nothing in the holy Scriptures that can warrant us in believing so dangerous a doctrine. . . .

If the doctrine were true that baptism is regeneration, then all those vast hoards of Indian captives that were driven to the baptismal font, by Cortes, Pizarro, and their infamous hosts of plunderers, who held over them the sword in the one hand and the cross in the other, must have been suddenly converted from heathenism to the true faith, and been fitted for the kingdom of God. . . .

. . . A vast majority of the Christian world has acknowledged a

[93] Bachman, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

belief in the necessity of infant baptism. . . . If baptism is regeneration, why does not every child baptised in infancy, henceforth walk with God, and lead a devoted pious life. Now is this the fact? Have we not on the contrary the most unquestionable evidence, from the conduct of thousands of young persons, that their hearts are yet unchanged . . .

We have now, we think, conclusively shown, that this doctrine is every where opposed by the letter and meaning of the Scriptures; it may, however, be inquired, is it not countenanced by the creed of our Church, from whence it is pretended to be derived? We answer, let the language of our confession speak for itself. The following is the whole of our article on baptism.

"Concerning baptism, our Churches teach that it is a necessary ordinance, that it is a *means of grace,* and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God, and received into his favor."

Here then it is plainly declared that baptism is only the means of grace, and in conformity to these views, our Churches, both in Europe and America, teach no other doctrine, and feel themselves authorized, from the Scriptures, and the articles of their faith, to declare that baptism is not regeneration.[94]

The next error which is pretended to be sanctioned by the doctrines of our Church, is that, which the Reformers opposed by all the force of argument, and by all the authority of the plainest interpretations of the word of God. "That in the Lord's supper the elements became the actual flesh and blood of Christ." This, as well as the last, is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. . . . According to this doctrine the priest is supposed to possess the miraculous power, by pronouncing these four words—Hoc est corpus meum— . . . converting a piece of bread, in the form of a wafer, into the real body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ. . . . If a man can once bring his mind to believe such a doctrine, he must have arrived at a state of credulity that will render him incapable of deciding between truth and error. . . .

But, it will be inquired, what were the sentiments of the early Reformers of the Church on this subject, and especially of Luther, who was slow in laying aside the errors in which he had been educated . . . whose mind was for a long time shackled by early prejudices. . . . Let us deal as honestly with Luther as he dealt

[94] Bachman, *op. cit.,* pp. 14–18.

with himself. He renounced, towards the close of his life, several of the doctrines which he had advocated at an earlier period. . . .

Whilst, however, all the Reformers agreed in rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, they unfortunately differed among themselves as to what they should substitute in its stead, and Luther, Melanchton, Calvin, Zwinglius, and others, all had their peculiar views, in which there may be traced considerable shades of difference, as well as obscurity. The language of Christ at the institution being highly figurative, "This is my body," led the majority to adopt the sentiment that the Saviour's spiritual body was present in the Eucharist. . . .

Have we not a right then to appeal to the candor and liberality of our Protestant brethren, between whose faith and ours, the difference is so slight that it can scarcely be detected. What if some of our members believe that the spiritual body of their risen and ascended Saviour be present in the sacrament, and after their rejection of transubstantiation, it can only be present in a spiritual manner, does our article differ materially from the creeds of other Churches.[95]

We proceed to the third, and last, error which has been adopted by those who profess to have derived the doctrine from the creed of the Lutheran Church, viz: "That in partaking of the sacraments we become entitled to salvation." We have . . . shown . . . that this doctrine is unscriptural. The Scriptures every where assure us, that the Gospel is the great instrument of regeneration.[96]

Dr. Bachman acknowledges, at several points in this discourse, his indebtedness to Professor S. S. Schmucker's *Popular Theology.*[97]

Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the *Lutheran Observer,* was a fearless and vigorous expositor of such views as were promulgated under the name of "American Lutheranism". A series of articles published by him in this church paper, under the title "Why Are

[95] Bachman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19, 22, 25.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[97] He speaks of Professor S. S. Schmucker as "a learned modern divine": *ibid.*, p. 23.

You a Lutheran?" was collected and republished in a volume bearing the same title in 1843. This volume was heartily recommended by twenty-seven leading American Lutheran clergymen, who affirmed in their joint recommendation that they "cordially recommend the contemplated work to our churches, and to all others who wish to obtain correct views respecting the character and position of American Lutheranism."[98] The work reached its twelfth edition by 1856.

"The great fundamental principle of Lutheranism" is presented in the volume, as follows:

> . . . that the inspired Writings, "without note or comment" and apart from all human tradition, are the only unerring source of religious knowledge, and the only infallible rule of Christian faith and practice. The Lutheran church regard the Bible as so plain and easy to be understood in all that is essential to salvation, that its signification may be learned without the aid of an expositor, by every person of common sense, who is able to read it.[99]

"Symbolical books . . . have no authority beyond what they derive from the scriptures of truth, whose sense and meaning they are designed to convey." The author names the historic Lutheran confessions, but adds:

[98] This joint recommendation, under the date of May 19, 1843, together with the names of those who signed it, appear immediately after the title-page. *Why Are You a Lutheran? Or A Series of Dissertations, Explanatory of the Doctrines, Government, Discipline, Liturgical Economy, Distinctive Traits, &c. of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States.*—B. Kurtz, D.D.—With an Introduction by John G. Morris, D.D.

[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14. Dr. Kurtz, as did S. S. Schmucker in his "Portraiture of Lutheranism", follows Dr. Mosheim. Cf. *ante*, pp. 133–134, foot-note 34.

. . . strictly speaking, the Augsburg Confession alone is usually regarded as *the sole symbolical book of the Lutheran church.*[100]

Concerning this Confession

. . . no more is required even of ministers at their ordination than to believe, that "the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct, in its doctrinal articles." [101]

The other symbolical summaries are not referred to at all at the admission either of private members or of ministers.[102]

Moreover, there is

. . . an established principle among Lutherans, not to exact uniformity of sentiment on minor points. While they regard the Bible as the only and sufficient rule of faith, and the Augsburg Confession as a correct methodical exponent of the fundamental truths of the Scriptures, they at the same time "agree to differ", when the rights of conscience require it, in non-essentials.[103]

Accordingly,

. . . in relation to the *precise nature* of the Eucharist and the *mode* of the divine presence in that ordinance, as well as on all other subjects not clearly determined in the Word of God, they have long since settled down in the happy conviction, that it is their right to adopt those views which seem best to accord with the teachings of inspiration, while none shall be permitted to molest them or make them afraid.[104]

The much disputed question about the *mode* of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, I must here premise that Lutherans do not believe in *consubstantiation, subpanation,* nor *impanation.* These errors have indeed been again and again imputed to them; but they repudiate them all. I know not and never did know a single minister

[100] B. Kurtz, *Why Are You a Lutheran?* etc., p. 14, foot-note.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 214–215.

or intelligent layman in the whole Lutheran church who believed in any one of them. As for that abomination of Romanism, called *transubstantiation,* no branch of the church of Christ is more decidedly opposed to it than the Lutheran. . . . It is an outrageous monstrosity, hatched more than a thousand years after this sacrament was instituted; and consubstantiation is cousin-*german* to it.

With regard to the *particular mode* of Christ's presence, it must be admitted that some Lutherans in their endeavors to explain it, have adopted phraseology which was calculated to give rise to the opinion that they believed in consubstantiation, and there are still a few,—precious few, and they mostly from Europe,[105] who profess to believe in a *peculiar* mode of the divine presence in the Eucharist . . . a presence and influence of the glorified body of Christ, which is not only deeply mysterious, but also extraordinary, unique and supernatural, and of which they themselves can form no distinct or definite idea. But as these form exceptions to the great body of the Lutheran church, and it is certain, from the manifest absurdity of the doctrine, that their number never can become large in the Lutheran church, it would be unfair to represent their view as that of the Lutherans in this country.[106]

The commonly accepted view "of the great mass of Lutherans in the United States, and of a very large number of learned Lutheran divines in Europe",[107] on the Eucharist is, then:

It is a standing memorial of the great sacrifice which was offered to God for the sins of the world, and is one of the seals of the evangelic covenant.[108]

The bread and wine remain unchanged in the Lord's Supper . . . they are merely symbolic representations of the Savior's body, but . . . there is nevertheless a special spiritual blessing bestowed on all worthy communicants by which their faith and Christian graces are strengthened.[109]

Whatever may have been the views of the early reformers on this subject, it is certain that in the present day Lutheran churches hold

[105] A significant remark!
[106] B. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–223.
[107] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

to none other but a spiritual presence of Christ in the holy supper.[110]

It may, however, be objected that the language used in Article XI of the Augsburg Confession is too strong to admit of this interpretation; for it is there affirmed "that the body and blood of Christ are (vere adsint) *actually present.*" But it must be remembered that the German copy of the Confession teaches how this language is to be understood; and that version expressly declares, that the body and blood are present "under the *form* and *emblems* of bread and wine." Consequently it is a *spiritual* presence to which the Confession alludes. . . .

If it be . . . objected that Lutherans had no right . . . to soften and explain away the strong phraseology of the Confession; I reply that they certainly had a right to define the import of their own language and to tell what they meant by it.[111]

In his discussion of baptism, the author makes no mention of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[112] Professor S. S. Schmucker's theological leadership is also recognized in this work by lengthy quotations from and references to that author's *Popular Theology.*

Other examples of published works by American Lutheran divines following in the general trend of the type of Lutheranism advocated by the Gettysburg professor might be cited,[113] but sufficient examples have

[110] B. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

[111] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–225.

[112] See *ibid.*, pp. 81 ff. Dr. Kurtz, in 1840, published a volume of 370 pages on baptism, wherein the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was plainly not taught. *Arguments Derived from Sacred Scripture and Sound Reason, Exhibiting the Necessity and Advantages of Infant Baptism; and Proving Sprinkling or Affusion to Be the Most Scriptural and Appropriate Mode of Administering It; Together with a Number of Essays on Important Subjects Connected with Baptism.*—Benjamin Kurtz, D.D.

[113] For example: *Luther's Shorter Catechism, Illustrated by Additional Questions and Answers,* John G. Morris, Pastor of the First English Lutheran Church, Baltimore; *The Catechumen's Guide, Prepared with Special Reference to the Wants of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States,* Charles A. Smith, Pastor of the Asso-

been presented to show that "American Lutheranism" had a following among conspicuous leaders in that day.

An effort was made, under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, to stem the growing tide of confessionalism in his own synod, the Synod of Maryland. This was in 1843. As an advocate of the movement known as "New Measures",[114] he proposed the following preamble and resolution:

ciate Ev. Luth. Churches, Palatine, N. Y.; *The Lutheran Sunday School Question Book, Or a Help to the Systematic Study of the Sacred Scriptures. Compiled from the German, and designed for Sunday School Bible Classes, and Catechetical Instruction,* S. W. Harkey, Pastor of the Lutheran Church, Frederick, Md.; *A New and Complete System of Christian Baptism Forever Established upon the Immutability of Scripture Facts and Evidences, Common Sense and the Nature of Things; Together with Essays on the Subjects of Feet Washing and the Holy Kiss,* C. C. Guenther, Minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ashland, Ohio.

[114] The name "new-measures" was applied to that group of Lutherans who were advocating emphasis on "experimental religion", conversion, and revival-meetings. It is evident that to this group were attracted many such who looked with disfavor on the growing emphasis of confessional orthodoxy. Dr. Kurtz had defended the "new-measures" in the *Lutheran Observer* in a series of articles. Rev. S. W. Harkey had proposed to his synod that it publish "a monthly periodical to be styled the 'Revivalist;' to be devoted to the history and defence of genuine revivals of religion, revival intelligence, the best measures and means of promoting and managing revivals, and in general, to the furtherance of practical godliness among all classes of men." *Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland. Held at Westminster, Carroll county, Md., October, 1843,* pp. 14–15.

The ministers and churches of the Franckean Synod "more than ten years ago . . . were accused of adopting new measures, because they advocated revivals of religion and engaged in protracted meetings, prayer meetings, &c." This Synod defended itself as follows: "Our ministers have ever been the decided advocates of experimental religion and a holy ministry, and the firm friends of revivals, temperance, &c., for which they have been greatly persecuted by those who afterwards appeared to have been convinced of their error. . . . The first anxious seat [or "bench"] was opened among us in 1831, and has been used more or less ever since as a blessed means of calling out awakened

Whereas, it is at all times proper for Synod to express its sentiments on important subjects that have a close affinity to religion, and are calculated to exert an essential influence on the prosperity of the church of God;— And

whereas, considerable diversity of opinion prevails in relation to what are termed *"New Measures,"* and opinions and practices are often imputed to those who favor those measures, which they disavow;— And

whereas, by these means many injurious misapprehensions, and some discord have arisen, so that it has become exceedingly desirable that this Synod should *define its position* in relation to this matter, and distinctly avow its sentiments: Therefore:

. . . *Resolved,* That a committee of *three* be appointed to draught a minute expressive of the views of this Synod in regard to what are usually denominated *New Measures.*[115]

On this committee were appointed Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, Dr. J. G. Morris, and Rev. S. W. Harkey. The committee reported at the same convention of this synod recommending that the body go on record in favor of the so-called New Measures. After a two days' vigorous discussion and a postponement, the recommendation was dropped.

The attempt, however, had an important result. It served as a barometer of the general doctrinal character of that body, and it brought about the celebrated document known as the "Abstract of Doctrines and Practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland", which was a vigorous attempt to commit that

and convicted sinners, and has been approbated of God to the conversion of thousands of souls. . . . Let it be our great aim, however, brethren, to place our reliance for success . . . not so much upon measures, as upon preaching faithfully . . . the Lord Jesus . . ."—*Journal of the Seventh Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod. Convened at Parishville, Oswego Co., N. Y., June 6, 1844,* p. 7.

[115] *Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland. Held at Westminster, Carroll county, Md., October, 1843,* p. 8.

Synod to a definite expression in favor of "American Lutheranism". At the convention of 1844

The following preamble and resolutions were then passed.

Whereas, the doctrines and practices of the Lutheran church in the United States, have been variously and repeatedly misrepresented, we, the clerical members of this Synod, feel bound, in duty to the church, and for the sake of the truth, to exhibit a summary of the doctrines which we believe and teach, and of the practices which prevail in our churches.

Therefore, *Resolved,* That a committee of three be appointed, whose duty it shall be to prepare a summary of the doctrines and usages of the church, within the limits of this Synod, and report at our next meeting.[116]

Rev. S. W. Harkey, president of the synod, tactfully appointed as members of this committee Professor Baugher, Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, and himself! Judged by the names of "the majority on this committee" it is evident that the report would be decidedly in favor of "American Lutheranism". The report, submitted the following year, contains the following expressions on the subjects of "regeneration", "sacraments", and "the Symbolical Books":

On Regeneration.—We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration is the act of God, the Holy Ghost, by which, through the truth, the sinner is persuaded to abandon his sins and submit to God, on the terms made known in the gospel. This change, we are taught, is radical, and is essential to present peace and eternal happiness. Consequently, it is possible, and is the privilege of the regenerated person to know and rejoice in the change produced in him. . . .

Of the Sacraments.—We believe that the Scriptures teach, that there are but two sacraments, viz.: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in each of which, truths essential to salvation are symbolically represented. We do not believe that they exert any influence *"ex opere operato,"* but only through the faith of the believer. Neither

[116] *Proceedings of the Evang. Lutheran Synod of Maryland, Held at Middletown, October, 1844,* p. 11.

do the scriptures warrant the belief, that Christ is present in the Lord's Supper in any other than a spiritual manner. . . .

Of the Symbolical Books.—Luther's Larger and Smaller Catechisms, the Formula Concordiæ, Augsburg Confession, Apology, and Smalkald Articles are called in Germany the Symbolical Books of the church. We regard them as good and useful exhibitions of truth, but do not receive them as binding on the conscience, except so far as they agree with the word of God.[117]

The Maryland-Synod Abstract was never accepted by the body: the number of clergymen who had moved along stricter confessional lines was large enough to block any such attempt.[118] This document may be taken as the forerunner of the Definite Synodical Platform which appeared ten years later.[119]

These two tilts in this body left a mark on Dr. Benjamin Kurtz. Having defended "New Measures" and the Maryland Synod Abstract in the *Lutheran Observer* and having been opposed by his own synod in

[117] Quoted from S. S. Schmucker, D.D., *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated, in several Occasional Discourses*, pp. 225–226.

[118] See discussion of "Doctrinal and Liturgical Development", p. 151, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1820–1920*, by Rev. Prof. Abdel Ross Wentz, Ph.D. . . . Published by the Authority of the Synod.

[119] Dr. Adolph Spaeth in his life of *Charles Porterfield Krauth* concurs in this statement in the following words: "This attempt to substitute such an 'abstract' for the full and precise language of the Confession of the Church was a sort of forerunner of the famous 'Definite Platform,' which appeared about ten years afterward." He adds: "Professor S. S. Schmucker, in Gettysburg, was so much pleased with the 'abstract' that he referred to it again and again in his lectures and articles, and even made his students commit to memory its principal statements."—*Charles Porterfield Krauth, D.D., LL.D., Norton Professor of Systematic Theology and Church Polity in the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia; Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, and Vice-Provost of the University of Pennsylvania*, by Adolph Spaeth, D.D., LL.D., Professor in the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. 2 vol. Vol. I, p. 114.

regard to matters which came close to his interest—all this left him bitter. He prosecuted his attacks on the "Symbolists" and "head-christians" (his own epithets) with increasing vigor.

A further attempt was made to stem the confessional tide—this in 1845 in the General Synod itself. The moving spirits were Dr. Benjamin Kurtz and Professor S. S. Schmucker. It follows the same procedure as that in the Synod of Maryland, the year previous. The following resolution appears on the General Synod's Minutes for 1845:

> *Resolved,* That a committee be appointed to prepare and report to the next General Synod, a clear and concise view of the doctrines and practice of the American Lutheran church.[120]

The chairman of this convention, Dr. Henry N. Pohlman, tactfully appointed "the committee of Foreign Correspondence" to serve. This committee consisted of Professor S. S. Schmucker, Dr. J. G. Morris, Professor H. I. Smith (Hartwick Seminary), Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, and Dr. H. N. Pohlman![121] This list of names suggests, beforehand, the type of report to be expected! At the next convention the appointed committee, "at their request, were allowed longer time for the preparation of their report".[122] In 1850 the report "closely resembling the Maryland Synod Abstract"[123]

[120] *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened in Philadelphia, May 16, 1845,* p. 54.

[121] *Ibid.,* p. 84.

[122] *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened in New York, May 13th, 1848,* p. 22.

[123] *The Lutheran Church in American History,* A. R. Wentz, Ph.D., D.D., p. 174.

was submitted. The following action was taken by the General Synod:

> Dr. Pohlman, from the committee on the doctrines and practices of the Lutheran Church, made a report, which was laid on the table, and the committee discharged from further duty.[124]

A decided and effective blow was therewith hurled against the official recognition of "American Lutheranism". The prevailing doctrinal and confessional position of a large number in this general body of Lutherans in America at this period is clearly revealed in the sermon preached at that convention by its presiding officer, Dr. Charles Philip Krauth, editor of the *Evangelical Review* [125] and a member on the same faculty with Professor S. S. Schmucker at Gettysburg. A few extracts from the printed sermon will suffice to show the trend of the times and the reasons why the above committee was so abruptly dismissed:

> The time has, perhaps, arrived, in which it becomes the duty of the Lutheran Church in the United States to examine its position, and to determine its future course. . . .
>
> The Lutheran Church in this country traces its origin to the Lutheran Church in Germany. . . . Coeval with the Reformation, and established upon the doctrinal system of Luther, as expressed in the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles and the Catechism of Luther, as developed and explained in the Formula Concordiæ, its history has been illustrious. . . . Its first ministers, educated in the schools of sound Lutheran theology, designed to transfer the same to this country. . . . That the orthodoxy of the olden time was gradually lost sight of, that the Confessions were practically superseded, that formal subscription was entirely abandoned, are facts which admit of no controversy. It is true, since

[124] *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened in Charleston, S. C., April 27, 1850*, p. 27.

[125] See *ante*, p. 143.

the commencement of the era, as it has been called, of the General Synod,[126] the Augsburg Confession has again been brought into notice, and a limited subscription to it enforced; but it cannot be regarded as anything more than an approximate return to the ancient landmarks. . . .

The Lutheran church in this country is in a state of reaction. She has passed, in some parts, through an extreme subjectivity, an extreme leaning to the emotional in religion. . . . She is now retracing her steps, acknowledging her error, seeking release from crude views and objectionable measures. She is hunting amongst the records of the past for the faith of former days, and endeavoring to learn what she was in her earliest form. The desire for the symbols of our church, the attention that is paid to them, the admiration that has been expressed of them . . . all indicate a new state of things . . . the church is disposed to renew her connection with the past, and in her future progress to walk under the guidance of the light which it has furnished.

There is no fear of any doctrine which our symbols contain, no unwillingness to give it a fair examination, and a predisposition, rather than the contrary, to receive and assent. . . .

We believe that there has been too much looseness, in our church, in regard to the necessity and utility of creeds, in general. The change from the original ground occupied by the church, the disuse of the symbols, the latitudinarianism about them, were calculated to be productive of much evil. . . . We believe that the evils to be dreaded from the neglect of the symbols, have not followed in a very great degree, yet they have in some. . . .

Now we suppose that this requires a remedy, and we can suggest no other, in the present state of our church, than the use of the Augustan Confession as a creed, and requiring the subscription of it, within certain limits, by every minister of Jesus Christ who serves at our altars. It may be said, that it has been used, that it has received the sanction of the General Synod of our church. . . . This is true, but we object to the liberty allowed in that subscription. . . . The terms of the subscription are such as to admit of the rejection of any doctrine or doctrines which the subscriber may not receive. It is subscribed or assented to as containing the doctrines of the

[126] Referring to S. S. Schmucker's discourse, "Retrospect of Lutheranism", printed on p. 29 in *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses.*

word of God substantially; they are set forth in substance, the understanding is that there are some doctrines in it, not contained in the word of God, but there is no specification concerning them. Every one could omit from his assent whatever he did not believe. The subscription did not preclude this. It is at once evident that a creed thus presented is no creed, that it is anything or nothing, that its subscription is a solemn farce. . . .

What then is to be done? We insist upon a creed, we consider it a *sine qua non;* the church cannot operate harmoniously, efficiently without it, the only course that we can devise is to give it normative authority. . . .

Too ignorant have we been of our own doctrines, and our own history, too little have we known of the fountain from which we sprang, and we have taken pride in times past in claiming a paternity in every reputable form of christianity, and have denied our proper parentage, in our mendicancy for foreign favors. Shame that it has been so! . . . Let us go back to our father's house . . . let us sit down at his table. . . . They will better suit our appetite than the crumbs which we have gathered elsewhere. . . .

It is our duty to exert a conservative influence. . . .[127]

The remaining significant publications from the pen of S. S. Schmucker, *i. e.,* from 1845 to 1855, may be taken as apologetic to his advocacy of the type of Lutheranism which he had been teaching the candidates for the Lutheran ministry at Gettysburg and which he had stanchly maintained throughout his public career. With the opposition to his "American Lutheranism" growing more acute during this period, the apologetic character of his writings turns to a vigorous polemic against "Old Lutheranism". What had been implicit in his former published discourses now becomes explicit. Lines of distinction are made sharper in the issue at hand. By 1855, through further criticisms and

[127] Extracts from a sermon delivered by Dr. C. Philip Krauth before the General Synod in Charleston, S. C., 1850, and printed under the title "The Lutheran Church in the United States" on pp. 1–16 in the *Evangelical Review,* Vol. II, July, 1850.

opposition, his doctrinal program had reached that degree where definite lines were ready to be drawn.

Gradually, the mantle of theological leadership was taken from him. His colleagues at the seminary were following in the wake of the tide and advocating, as did Dr. C. Philip Krauth, a return to the Lutheranism found in the historic symbols. He was the sole advocate of "American Lutheranism" at the seminary. Even his students of former years and other associates were turning from him to the other side. Dr. John G. Morris is the typical example. Speaking of his student days under Professor S. S. Schmucker, in a published book of reminiscences, Dr. Morris—who in his later ministerial career reeled completely over to a confessional type of Lutheranism—remarks:

> His [Prof. S. S. Schmucker's] teaching gradually brought me over to his opinions, for I was not well established in true Lutheranism; but when I became free from his influence and pursued independent research, I settled down in the true faith. This is the case with many others who were students in the Seminary when Dr. S. S. Schmucker was theological professor. He himself became aware of this departure from his teachings before he died, and it grieved him exceedingly.[128]

And, in another published work, Dr. Morris, quoting one of Dr. S. S. Schmucker's pupils, refers to the growing opposition and the rapidly declining following which that distinguished teacher of ministers was experiencing during this period:

> He [Prof. S. S. Schmucker] had his enemies in the Lutheran Church all along, and leading men in the Pennsylvania Synod, and in the New York Ministerium, and in Ohio and North Carolina,

[128] John G. Morris, D.D., *Life Reminiscences of an Old Lutheran Minister*, pp. 49–50.

opposed his Puritanism, but he bravely maintained his position up to about 1846. About that time his Lutheran orthodoxy began to be suspected by some of his own students, and especially those who had charge of Pennsylvania College. An unpleasant state of things grew out of this want of confidence in his Lutheranism. By this time, too, the German and Scandinavian elements began to be more potent in the United States, and many, even of the Gettysburg men (*i. e.,* those who had studied there), began to lose confidence in him as the leader of the church. No one ever doubted his sincerity, his learning or his piety—his views in his "Theology," his "Patriarchs of Lutheranism," his "Lutheran Church in America," and other works, had been so fully and clearly expressed that there could be no mistaking them. He defended his views with great ingenuity and force, but all to no purpose, the tide set in against him, and he could not stem it.[129]

The more important published discourses and theological works of Dr. S. S. Schmucker which take on this apologetic and polemic character from 1845 to 1855 are: *The Patriarchs of American Lutheranism; The Nature of the Saviour's Presence in the Eucharist; The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the American Lutheran Church; Vocation of the American Lutheran Church;* and a summary work, *Lutheran Manual on Scriptural Principles: or, The Augsburg Confession Illustrated and Sustained, Chiefly by Scripture Proofs and Extracts from Standard Lutheran Theologians of Europe and America.*

The American Lutheran Church, the author argues, has, historically, assumed a distinct type, in contradistinction to the Lutheran churches of Europe of the present day, or Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This distinctive type of Lutheranism dates from the Patriarch Muhlenberg and his associates through the history of the Pennsylvania and

[129] John G. Morris, *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry,* p. 136.

New York Synods, together with the Mother Synod in the South and then through the peculiar historical character of the General Synod. The Lutheranism which has been built around this American branch of Protestantism has taken to itself that freedom and independence which has ever been the ideal of those who came to these shores. This distinctive type is a contribution to Protestantism, and even to Lutheranism itself, and should be maintained.

Why should there not be an *American* Lutheran church, as well as any other? There is a German, a Danish, a Swedish Lutheran church, each possessing its distinctive peculiarities, arising from their different civil governments, and the different views of those who founded them, to say nothing of the differences between one church in the several kingdoms and principalities of Germany. Then why should not American Lutherans be permitted to organize their church, in accordance with the principles of their own glorious civil institutions, in conformity to the dictates of their own consciences and their views of the inspired word of God? Are they less able to search the Scriptures with fidelity and success, than their brethren of other countries? Are we less competent to judge of what suits our peculiar circumstances, and the peculiar age of the world, and the signs of the eventful times in which we live than others? [130]

"Old Lutherans" advocate a dismissal of this distinctive type inherited through the line of the Patriarch, and urge a return to the European Lutheranism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the introduction of the historic symbols and the special doctrines therein inculcated, as a basis of fellowship.

[130] "The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the American Lutheran Church", p. 234, published in *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses*, S. S. Schmucker, D.D. (Fifth Edition.)

This is an entirely new departure from the generic character of the American Lutheran Church. Judged by the standards advocated by these "few bigoted ultra-Lutherans",[131] then

Luther himself was not a member of the church that bore his name [132]

for the rigid system of symbolism was not generally received during his day (much less "the Form of Concord, which was not in existence till thirty-six years after his death").[133] Moreover, such a standard would limit the title of "Lutheran" only to those who have received the Symbolical Books as such. This excludes those nations that rejected the Form of Concord: Denmark,[134] Sweden, Hessia, Pomerania, Holstein which "rejected it for more than half a century", Anhalt, and a number of self-governing cities. Added to this list, those countries which held other of the symbolical books in various degrees of acknowledgment.[135] One Symbol alone has had universal recognition:

The *Augsburg Confession is the only symbolic book, which has been acknowledged by the whole Lutheran church.*[136]

Even to this day, there is not a single Lutheran kingdom or principality, which receives any one of the former symbolical books as binding, except the Augsburg Confession, and this . . . only as to its substance.[137]

[131] S. S. Schmucker, "The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the American Lutheran Church", in *op. cit.*, p. 167.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 163–164.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[135] *Ibid.*, pp. 164–166.

[136] (Quoted by Dr. S. S. Schmucker from Hase, *Hutterus Redivivus, Dogmatik der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche.*) *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

The standard being set up by these "ultra-Lutherans", moreover, is set over against the practice of the fathers of the American Lutheran Church and that overwhelming majority of ministers in the General and district synods who made no such obligation in the ordination vows.

I was not even requested to pledge myself to any one of the symbolical books on entering the ministry, but to the inspired and infallible word of God. If subscription to the symbolical books is essential to the character of a Lutheran . . . a large part of all who were called Lutherans during the first half century of her existence, were in the same condition. . . . When we entered the holy office, no such obligation was customary or even thought of; no pledge to the symbolical books, or any one of them, was asked of us, or given by us. We selected the Lutheran church as the church of our choice, *as she then was,* not as she had been two or three centuries ago.[138]

Our earliest preachers often referred to the symbolical books, and especially to the Augsburg Confession as an expose of their doctrinal views. . . . And yet it seems evident that in thus referring, they did not design to profess an absolute conformity; because they had certainly rejected several of the tenets of those books.[139]

The spirit of our Fathers was a spirit of *Eclecticism.* They called no man master, they acknowledged no head but Christ; no absolute authority but the Bible. They bound themselves to no set of forms derived from the old country, but retaining the grand land marks of Lutheranism . . . they adapted them to their altered circumstances in this country.[140]

Whilst the fathers of our Lutheran Zion were growing up, the church in their native land, was enjoying a glorious state of revival. The dead formality of the 17th century had been broken up by the influence of Spener and his coadjutors. . . . And as several of them

[138] S. S. Schmucker, "The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the American Lutheran Church", in *op. cit.*, p. 160.

[139] *Ibid.*, pp. 158–159.

[140] "Patriarchs of American Lutheranism", p. 118, published in *The American Lutheran Church,* etc., by S. S. Schmucker. (Fifth Edition.)

[*e. g.*, Muhlenberg, Brunholtz, Schultz, Kunze] had labored for a season as teachers in the school at Halle, it was but natural to expect that in pursuing their convictions of duty in this western world, their course would be substantially the same.[141]

The framers of the Americo-Lutheran church were in habits of cordial intercourse with Whitefield and Tennant, the two most active revival preachers of that day. . . . They proved themselves friends of spiritual religion and religious revival. . . .[142]

It is certain our American fathers did not formally adopt these [symbolic] books, but in several instances practically required assent to them at licensure or ordination, and probably for some years longer . . . required candidate's assent to the Augsburg Confession alone, practically rejecting the other books; and they did recommend the smaller catechism of Luther as a book for catechetical instruction; but their successors gradually disapproving of this pledge, practically rejected it, as well as any pledge to the other symbolic books, about half a century ago, *which they had a perfect moral right to do.*[143]

During the first thirty years of this century, the great body of the American Lutheran church had . . . no human creed at all binding upon them, though they always did refer (as we still do,) to the Augsburg Confession, as a substantial expose of their doctrines. As freemen, and servants only of Christ, they felt that they had the right . . . to conduct the affairs of his church according to the dictates of their own conscience, guided by the Scriptures; and we have yet to see any evidence that they were under any obligation of honor or honesty, to pursue a different course.[144]

Their real doctrinal position, at the formation of the General Synod, was that of fundamental agreement with the Augsburg Confession, and acknowledged dissent from it on some minor or non-fundamental points . . . subsequently made symbolic or binding by the General Synod, in her Constitution for Synods, and *this is the official creed of the General Synod.*[145]

[141] S. S. Schmucker, "Patriarchs of American Lutheranism", in *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 95, 96.

[142] *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 99.

[143] "The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the American Lutheran Church", pp. 160–161, *op. cit.*

[144] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[145] *Ibid.*, pp. 161–162.

Against the innovations of the "Old Lutherans" stand a whole array of conspicuous American Lutheran leaders in protest: such as the Patriarch himself and his associates, the founders of the General Synod,[146] and such names in the history of this organization as Schober,[147] Lochmann,[148] Hazelius,[149] Endress,[150] Lintner,[151] B. Kurtz,[152] G. B. Miller,[153] Probst,[154] Baugher,[155] J. G. Morris,[156] S. S. Schmucker,[157]—all of whom, agreeing on the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church, in the spirit of fraternity, continued to prosecute their own theological views, differing on non-fundamental doctrines and dissenting from several of the tenets taught in the historic symbols.

Against the charge "that no Lutheran is entitled to the name, who does not believe and profess the whole catalogue of the former symbolic books, or at least *so* receive the Augsburg Confession, as not to contradict the teachings of any one of the other books",[158] Dr. S. S. Schmucker replies:

> *Our own impression of the equity of the case is this, that so long as the Lutheran church, in this or any other country, adheres to the*

[146] Mentioned by name at several points in the same discourse. See *ante*, p. 35.

[147] "The Doctrinal Basis", etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 202–203, 215, 217.

[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 174–175, p. 221.

[149] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[150] *Ibid.*, pp. 204–205, 222.

[151] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

[153] *Ibid.*, p. 210.

[154] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[155] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[156] *Ibid.*, pp. 230–231.

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 231: refers to the widespread acceptance of his *Popular Theology*.

[158] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

fundamental principle of Lutheranism, that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and believes the great, the cardinal doctrines of Luther's system, together with so many of his peculiarities, as to agree more fully with them as a whole, than with the peculiarities of any other denomination, she may justly retain the Lutheran name; and all the world, a few ultraists excepted, will cordially proclaim the equity of the designation.[159]

The author then gives his attitude to creeds in general:

Ecclesiastical obligations are voluntary and personal; and not either hereditary or compulsory. Hence the church, that is, the ministry and laity of every age, have as good a right, and are as much under obligation to oppose, and, if possible, to change what they believe wrong in the religious practice of their predecessors and to conform it to the word of God, as were Luther and the other christians of the sixteenth century.[160]

One of the characteristic features of the Christian church, by which the wisdom and benevolence of its Divine Author are illustriously displayed, is found in the fact, that, whilst he himself projected the fundamental lineaments of its external, visible organization, he left the great mass of minor features, to be filled up by the discretion of his disciples in the successive ages of the world.[161]

"*American* Lutheranism", the author again and again insists,

grew out of the Lutheran predilections of our fathers, the unrestricted liberty of following the scriptures, which they enjoyed in this Western world, and the influence of our free civil institutions. Under this joint influence they gradually rejected the symbolical bondage of Germany, and restored the original liberty in fundamentals, which Christ and his apostles bequeathed to us.[162]

Our fathers did introduce various improvements on the ecclesiastical institutions of Lutheran Europe, and adopt a system, which, *whilst* it is *Lutheran, is also American,* and more nearly conformed

[159] "The Doctrinal Basis", etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 167–168.
[160] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[161] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[162] *Ibid.*, pp. 244–245.

to the Apostolic model, than has been attained by the Lutheran church in any other country.[163]

The author then dramatically asks:

> They bought this liberty at the price of great sacrifices; and shall their American sons, that were "born free," suffer it to be taken from them? [164]

The final doctrinal stand and position as to church polity taken in behalf of "American Lutheranism" in these discourses are summarized as follows: 1. *"the practical rejection of the binding authority of all the former symbolical books, except the Augsburg Confession";* [165] 2. *"the rejection of several tenets formerly held by our Church in Europe, and taught in some of her former symbolical books";* such tenets as (a) *"exorcism",* (b) *"Private confession and absolution",* (c) "the doctrine that *the true body and blood of Christ are received with the bread and wine by the mouth of every communicant",* (d) *"Baptismal regeneration",* (e) *"the mass,* that is, *the name and some of the ceremonies of the Romish mass",* (f) *"the imputation to us as personal and damning guilt of that natural depravity, which has come upon us in consequence of Adam's transgression";* [166] 3. *"the reception of the Bible, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the acknowledgment of the Augsburg Confession as the recognized expression only of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible";* 4. *"Luther's Smaller Catechism,* (except the questions on exorcism,) not as a

[163] "The Doctrinal Basis", etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 156–157.
[164] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[165] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[166] *Ibid.*, pp. 237–242.

symbolical book, but as the authorized book for the catechetical instruction of the young, yet without any prohibition of other similar works";[167] 5. *"the Formula for Government and Discipline"*; 6. *"A Hymn Book"*; 7. *"A Liturgy, both German and English"*; 8. *Catechetical Instruction of the Young"*; 9. *"The admission of those who had been baptized in infancy, to sacramental communion, by confirmation"*; 10. *"Holding of prayer meetings and family worship"*;[168] 11. *"Special Conferences"*; 12. *"The promotion of a spirit of liberality and Christian union on scriptural principles,* among the different portions of our own church, and among evangelical Christian denominations in general."[169]

As to the future of "American Lutheranism" the author has no fears. In fact, he becomes prophetic, in saying that

> In less than twenty years they [the "Old Lutherans"] will themselves see their error, and change their position, and their children will be worthy members of our *American Lutheran Church.*[170]

No need to fear but that there will be a return to

> a consciousness of the fact, that one grand part of the vocation of the American churches is, to throw off the shackles of traditionary, patristic, and symbolic servitude . . . and to resume the Scripture lineaments of Christianity.[171]

Tolerance shall be shown those who have fallen into the old ways, provided:

[167] "The Doctrinal Basis", etc., *op. cit.*, p. 243.
[168] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[169] *Ibid.*, pp. 243–244.
[170] *Ibid.*, p. 246.
[171] "Vocation of the American Lutheran Church", in *op. cit.*, p. 250.

our old Lutheran brethren are willing to regard their peculiarities as non-essential, and live in peace with us.[172]

However,

if they cannot refrain from either regarding or denouncing us as dishonest, and pseudo Lutherans, and perjured, because we do not believe everything contained in confessions which we never adopted, and because we will not adopt books as symbolical, which contain numerous errors and Romish superstitions;

for ourselves, whilst we wish them well as individuals, we desire no ecclesiastical communion with them, either in our Synods, or General Synod; and believe it will be for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, that they should be associated with those who share their intolerance and bigotry.[173]

S. S. Schmucker recognized clearly that one of the peculiar doctrinal tenets in the historic symbols which had marked off, historically, the Lutheran group from those emanating from Calvin and Zwingli, and which was being revived by those who advocated a full acceptance of all the symbolical tenets, was the Lutheran view of the Lord's supper. To the charges preferred against him, that he had departed from the view of this sacrament presented in the Augsburg Confession and amplified in the later symbols, he was willing to make no apology. He insisted, only, that in leveling criticisms at him for this departure his critics would remember that he was but one among many of the American Lutherans who had taken a similar stand. Nevertheless, he was ready to defend his views and prove his position both "by the word of God" and by "the correct principles of common sense". This he did in an elaborate discussion on "The Nature of the

[172] "The Doctrinal Basis", etc., in *op. cit.*, p. 245.
[173] *Ibid.*, pp. 245–246.

Saviour's Presence in the Eucharist.'' [174] It will not be necessary to review this discourse, since the views presented coincide (although more fully treated) with those published in his translation of the *Biblical Theology of Storr and Flatt* [175] and his own *Popular Theology.*[176] Two passages of this discussion, however, are worthy of special note: *the one* as an interesting, definite and final summary of his view on that sacrament in a paraphrase of the words of institution and the Pauline amplification of the meaning of that sacrament; *the other,* his comments on the Lutheran doctrines of *communicatio idiomatum* and *ubiquity* which were taught in the Formula of Concord and vigorously maintained in many of the Lutheran dogmatical treatises.

[1.] And as they were eating, (the paschal supper,) Jesus took bread, (the unleavened bread or cake which had been prepared for the passover,) and having given thanks and pronounced a blessing, he gave the pieces of bread to his disciples, and said, Take, eat, this (bread, which is and remains bread and) signifies my (natural, not glorified) body, which is (to be) broken for you, (on the cross, crucified,) do this in (order to cherish the) remembrance of me. Likewise, he took the cup, after (the paschal) supper (was ended,) and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it, (of the wine, which was ordinary wine, that had been prepared for the Passover;) This cup (the wine in it) is (signifies or represents) the new testament in my blood, (represents the new covenant ratified by my blood,) which is (to be) shed (on the cross) for you, and for many for the remission of sins. This do ye as often as ye drink it, in (order to cherish the) remembrance of me. For as often as ye (reverently and devoutly) eat this bread and drink the wine in this cup (consecrated by prayer for the sacramental celebration) ye do show forth (perpetuate the memory of)

[174] (*Cf., ante,* p. 171.) Printed on pp. 120–154 in *op. cit.*
[175] *Ante,* pp. 88, 90–93.
[176] *Ante,* pp. 109–110.

the Lord's death, (upon the cross,) until he returns, (at the latter day, at the close of the present dispensation.) Whoever shall eat this bread and drink this wine unworthily, (irreverently and without faith and a due regard for the solemn design for which they were appointed,) is guilty of (in respect to) the body and blood of the Lord, (guilty of treating irreverently or profanely the emblems or memorials of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, and thus guilty of casting reproach on the Lord himself.) Let a man, therefore, examine himself (as to his knowledge of the design of the institution and his moral qualifications to receive it;) for he that eateth or drinketh unworthily (in an irreverent manner and without faith in Christ,) eateth and drinketh (judgment, *χριμα*, not) damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body, (not distinguishing between ordinary bread and these elements, instituted and consecrated as emblems of the Saviour's crucified body and blood.) [177]

[2.] In addition to the scriptural passages in favor of the presence of the body of the Saviour in the Lord's Supper, there is a theological argument or theory, which, though in part rejected by Luther himself, was adopted by some of his followers, and about a quarter of a century after his death, was introduced in its full development into the Form of Concord, which became the standard of Lutheran orthodoxy in some parts of Germany. . . .

The theory . . . was claimed by its advocates as a legitimate sequence of the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ, and is known as the *Communicatio Idiomatum,* or supposed reciprocal communication of attributes between the two natures of the Saviour, one result of which is to be, that his body now possesses *ubiquity;* and, therefore, can not only be present simultaneously wherever the Holy Supper is administered, but actually is present every where else in the universe. . . .

The idea that the properties of one substance can become the properties of a different substance, is a philosophical absurdity . . . the human nature of Christ [has become] itself . . . divine . . . the finite has become infinite, the creature has become the Creator . . . divinity [has become] humanity . . . confusion of natures. . . . We may upon this theory [ubiquity] as well say that Christ's body is in, with or under, every apple and pear, peach and cake,

[177] "The Nature of the Saviour's Presence in the Eucharist", in *op. cit.*, pp. 152–153.

as in the consecrated bread. . . . Nay this doctrine is not entirely exempt from liability to the charge of favoring *pantheism*.[178]

In April, 1855, S. S. Schmucker issued his *Lutheran Manual* constructed on principles similar to his *Popular Theology*,[179] with the texts of the Augsburg Confession in Latin, German, and English translation. His general confessional and doctrinal positions are maintained. It was essentially an endeavor to circulate the views represented in "American Lutheranism" in a concise and summary fashion. The whole work breathes less of the spirit of polemics and controversy. In fact, the author explicitly stated in a magazine review of the book that "on the few points, on which divergent opinions exist among us, authors of both sides are heard, and *no polemics introduced* so that . . . moderate men of neither class will have reason to complain." [180]

A scathing review of this book which appeared in the October number of the *Evangelical Review* the same year [181] is an index to the attitude taken by those who had for some time been suspicious of the "orthodoxy" of the Gettysburg professor. The reviewer begins by

[178] "The Nature of the Saviour's Presence in the Eucharist", in *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 136, 138, 139.

[179] See Preface, p. x, *Lutheran Manual on Scriptural Principles: or, The Augsburg Confession Illustrated and Sustained, Chiefly by Scripture Proofs and Extracts from Standard Lutheran Theologians of Europe and America; Together with the Formula of Government and Discipline, Adopted by the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, S. S. Schmucker. (*Cf., ante*, p. 171.)

[180] See the same author's account of the *Lutheran Manual* in the April number of the *Evangelical Review* for 1855, edited by C. P. Krauth, D.D. and Wm. M. Reynolds, D.D. Vol. VI.

[181] *The Evangelical Review*, Vol. VII, pp. 234–244. *Cf., ante*, pp. 142–143; p. 167 ff.

saying that he had hoped to see the author, in reviewing his doctrinal position, return to a more decided confessional basis and a more adequate interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, in particular. The book (it is charged) is full of "the most startling declarations", mutilations, amazing misconceptions and misrepresentations, with quoted extracts torn from their contexts—all of which is painful to those who revere and honor the venerable confession and the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran church.

> If a professed enemy had done this, we could bear it much more philosophically; but proceeding from one occupying the position the author does, it arouses a different feeling altogether, and provokes the prayer, "heaven save us from our friends!" [182]

"But God reigns", the reviewer concludes, and the "church must continue and grow in despite of the weakness of its friends, and the wrath of its foes." [183]

Such, then, was the opposition of a most formidable character, to the Gettysburg professor and those who had joined him in opposing the rising tide toward stricter confessionalism—the same year which witnessed the appearance of the Definite Synodical Platform. The issue between "American Lutheranism" and "Old Lutheranism" had not yet been definitely settled.

[182] *The Evangelical Review*, Vol. VII, p. 236.
[183] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

CHAPTER V

THE "DEFINITE SYNODICAL PLATFORM"

The conventions of the General Synod during these years just preceding 1855 were, outwardly, at least, quite peaceful. Lutherans of the old school and Lutherans of the new came together for their biennial meetings expecting to come into open conflict and clear the air. But convention succeeded convention with each side waiting for the other to precipitate the crisis. Both sides were fearful of the price that would have to be paid in case peace and harmony were disturbed. It was a most tense situation in the history of the American Lutheran Church.[1]

A letter written to Charles Porterfield Krauth, the rising young leader of conservative Lutheranism, and son of the editor of the *Evangelical Review,* by Dr. H. I. Schmidt, professor and associate of Dr. S. S. Schmucker at Gettysburg Theological Seminary, in 1853, is a typical expression of the fears mingled with caution which obtained among the conservative leaders "behind the scenes":

> My opinion has all along been, and both your father and Professor Reynolds entirely concur in it, that we Lutherans had better keep perfectly quiet at the next General Synod, and say nothing at all about "Doctrinal Basis" and the various matters that are now

[1] See the graphic account given by Dr. Adolph Spaeth, on p. 348 ff. in Vol. I of his life of *Charles Porterfield Krauth,* New York, 1898.

dividing and agitating the Church. Any more of an aggressive nature could, I think, do nothing but harm and only widen the breach. If all open conflict is avoided, our cause, I mean the cause of truth and of the Church, will continue silently and surely to gain ground, and thus the character of the General Synod will gradually, in the regular course of things, be changed and righted, in that the materials that compose it are made right.[2]

The reluctance on the part of the leader of "American Lutheranism" to carry out any overt act and thereby perhaps cause an inevitable split in the church is seen by the methods employed. S. S. Schmucker had tried hard to check the storm by presenting and circulating carefully prepared expositions of the peculiar tenets and confessional position of the American Lutheran Church—heroically consummated in his *Lutheran Manual.* As retiring presiding officer of the General Synod in 1853 [3] he preached on the following significant theme "The Peace of Zion", a plea to his ministerial brethren for mutual forbearance on points of non-essential difference. With the return of the Pennsylvania Ministerium that year [4] his hopes were renewed that the tide toward symbolism would soon subside and the prophecy which he had uttered [5] would soon be fulfilled. The preface to this published sermon shows forth a renewed optimism—and that he was still to continue the policy of watchful waiting.[6]

If patience, coolness, and tolerance were generous natural gifts with him, they were less conspicuous char-

[2] Letter dated New York, February 4, 1853, p. 349 Vol. I *idem.*

[3] See *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened in Winchester, Va., May 21, 1853,* Harrisburg, 1853.

[4] *Ante* p. 146 ff.

[5] *Ante* p. 179.

[6] *The Peace of Zion. Discourse before the General Synod,* 1853.

acteristics of two of his colleagues and leaders in the movement to sustain "American Lutheranism". Dr. Benjamin Kurtz was a fearless and bold writer of polemics in the *Lutheran Observer*—carrying on any controversy to the bitter end. A survey of that periodical during the years of his editorship will bear witness to his relentless and impetuous attacks on opinions or measures with which he was not in agreement. His was not the type which was willing to sit by and wait for the passing of events; rather he was ready to plunge into any dispute and carry on the controversy to its conclusion.[7] As such, he was pressing Dr. S. S. Schmucker to launch a more definite and unequivocal stand in behalf of "American Lutheranism". Moreover, pressure was being brought to bear in a similar way by Dr. S. S. Schmucker's pupil and brother-in-law, Dr. Samuel Sprecher, a professor of theology and president of Wittenberg Lutheran Seminary founded in 1845 at Springfield, Ohio, and a prominent leader in the affairs of the General Synod. In 1853, advocating a more frank and definite statement of the views of "American Lutheranism", he said:

> It is not to be denied that we have departed from the doctrines and customs of our Church in many respects. This we have done in the exercise of an undoubted right, and, I think, under the guidance of divine truth; but our position has never been explicitly enough defined. And as long as we do not adopt and publish some standard of American Lutheranism more definite than that of the General Synod, we will be in danger of leaving the minds of our

[7] "He was an able disputant with the pen and speech, and has gained credit in encounters with men distinguished for their controversial powers. [He is to be numbered among those] men who love controversy." *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry*, John G. Morris, Baltimore, 1878, p. 137.

rising ministry perplexed, and, from time to time, induced to attempt to believe doctrines and maintain customs condemned alike by the sacred Scriptures and the experience of Protestant Christianity.

I hope that this unhappy condition of the Church will not continue long, and that the churches of the General Synod will do as the churches of the Augsburg Confession did in 1580—exercise their right to declare what they regard as the doctrines of the sacred Scriptures in regard to all the points in dispute in the Church.

I do not believe that the present position of the General Synod can long be maintained; it will either result in the old Lutheran men and synods gaining the control of the General Synod, and reintroducing those doctrines and practices of the symbols which the churches in this country and everywhere ought to abandon and condemn, and *say that they do;* or the friends of the American Lutheran Church must define what doctrines they do hold, and what they do reject, and refuse to fraternize with, and to make themselves responsible for, and to give their influence as a church in favor of, men and doctrines and practices which they hold to be anti-Scriptural and injurious to the spiritual Kingdom of Christ.

I do not see how we can do otherwise than adopt the Symbols of the Church, or form a new symbol which shall embrace all that is fundamental to Christianity in them, rejecting what is unscriptural, and supplying what is defective.

A creed we must have, or we can have no real church union . . . in these times of doctrinal looseness and confusion. As long as the General Synod regards with equal favor, and is ready to receive, the old Lutheran as well as the American Lutheran Synods, the symbolical men have a vast advantage, and they, no doubt, regard it as a triumph when the General Synod, meeting after meeting, continues to hold out its arms to every Lutheran Synod, and recommends as heartily the reviews and institutions which are laboring to upturn its present foundations, as it does those which are known to hold the sentiments which it has hitherto fostered.[8]

Such, then, were the status and situation of the General Synod of Lutheran Churches in America in 1855

[8] *Charles Porterfield Krauth, D.D., LL.D., Norton Professor of Systematic Theology and Church Polity in the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia; Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, and Vice-Provost of the University of Pennsylvania"*, by Adolph Spaeth, D.D., LL.D., in two volumes; Vol. I, 1823–1859, New York, 1898. Vol. I, pp. 346–348.

—a period of restlessness, confusion, and uncertainty. The body was a composite group of men, those holding pronounced views in conflict with each other and those who had not yet committed themselves to either camp. Charges and counter-charges on the question of consistent Lutheranism had been hurled from within and from without; private correspondence and secret meetings on the part of a number of the leaders of that body had been carried on off the stage and behind the scenes. The air was charged with a tenseness which only diplomacy and skilful leadership kept from breaking into a violent storm.

To the ministry of the churches of this body in this situation of suspense in September of this eventful year, there came by mail a pamphlet of forty-two printed pages, bearing the title *Definite Synodical Platform* with no name other than that of the publishers. Upon opening this pamphlet, the reader was greeted with a specially inserted note of the following character:

> This Platform is sent to some Brethren who had no opportunity to order it, as it was thought they would desire to have it. Such are requested to peruse it, and if they wish to retain it, to send 25 cents in silver, or post-office stamps, by mail, post-paid, to Messrs. Miller & Burlock, Philadelphia. Should any not desire to retain it, they will please to enclose it carefully in paper, and send it, post-paid, to the same address.[9]

The air of mystery about this pamphlet, coming at the time it did and in the manner of its introduction into the various Lutheran manses, served immediately to

[9] *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod.*—Philadelphia: Miller & Burlock. 1855.

awaken curiosity and interest. It was destined to be the topic of the day as hundreds of the Lutheran clergy of the General Synod sat down to read and reflect upon its contents.[10]

An introductory "Note" betrayed at once its source.

N.B.—This Platform was prepared and published by consultation and co-operation of ministers of different Eastern and Western Synods, connected with the General Synod, at the special request of some Western brethren, whose churches desire a more specific expression of the General Synod's doctrinal basis, being surrounded by German churches, which profess the entire mass of former symbols.[11]

"American Lutheranism" was taking a definite stand, and there need no longer be any doubt as to its confessional and doctrinal position. The die was cast, and the issue between the two schools of Lutheranism was taken from out of the corner of confusion and uncertainty to the open field of definiteness and decision. The district synods of the General Synod now had a tangible and concrete expression of the views of this school, upon which they could act and decide their future course.

The introduction of this document and the controversy provoked by it form one of the most interesting

[10] Dr. Henry Eyster Jacobs in an interview granted the present writer (in Philadelphia, January 8, 1925) said he remembers well how, as a boy, he received the mysterious package one morning and opening it handed it to his father (Professor M. Jacobs). His father's curiosity was immediately aroused, and glancing through the contents he burst into an expression of indignation. He remembers, too, that in the conversation which took place in his father's study with Dr. Schaeffer, who happened to be a guest in the home, something was said to the effect that this publication bore the earmarks of the *Lutheran Manual*.

[11] *Definite Platform*, etc., p. 2.

and instructive chapters in American Lutheran Church history.

The proposed Definite Synodical Platform calls for a detailed examination of its contents.

The general confessional basis recommended herewith to the district synods includes, *first,* the acceptance of the Old and New Testaments as the only Infallible Rule of Faith and Practice; *secondly,* the acknowledgment of the two historic symbols of the Christian Church, viz., the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as testimonies and explanations of Christian faith; and *thirdly,* the avowal of the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession" as herein printed.[12] The government and discipline of the churches were to be the same as had been used in the General Synod and found in that Synod's Hymn Book; [13] with freedom on the part of each district synod to enact into by-laws such additions or alterations consonant with that document.[14]

[12] Page 6. "We believe, teach, and confess, that the only rule and standard, according to which all doctrines and teachers alike ought to be tried and judged, are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone. . . ."

Page 5. "Therefore, Resolved, That this Synod hereby avows its belief in the following doctrinal Platform, including the so-called *Apostles' Creed,* the *Nicene Creed,* and *the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession.* . . ."

[13] *Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* published by the General Synod. Baltimore, 1842; pp. 32–35 in *Hymns, Selected and Original, for Public and Private Worship, Published by the General Synod for the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* 37th edition. Baltimore 1845. Also see *ante,* p. 81 ff.

[14] "*Resolved,* That we receive the General Synod's Formula of Government and Discipline, contained in her Hymn Book, as our directory;

The significance of the Definite Synodical Platform lay in its attitude toward the Augsburg Confession and the historic Lutheran Symbols. The former is presented in an abridged form; the latter are wiped off the board as not essential to Lutheran fellowship. The document emphasizes its attitude toward the historic Symbols and confessional statements as having less authority than that of the holy Scriptures.

> They are only a testimony and explanation of our faith, showing the manner in which at any time the holy Scriptures were understood and explained by those who then lived, in respect to articles that had been controverted in the church of God, and also the grounds on which doctrines that were opposed to the holy Scriptures, had been rejected and condemned.[15]

The attitude taken, then, toward the historic Lutheran Symbols is definitely and boldly stated in the following plain terms: "our rejection of all the other books except the Augsburg Confession." [16] Here it takes a decided issue with those "German churches, which profess the entire mass of former symbols." [17] The Form of Concord for example, it is argued, was not only not known by either Luther or Melanchthon, but it was forced upon the Lutheran churches by civil authorities in certain of the European kingdoms.[18]

and that any additions or alterations we may desire, we will embody in by-laws; so that our beloved Church may possess and exhibit to the world entire harmony in the reception of one Doctrinal and Disciplinarian Platform." Pages 5, 6.

[15] Pages 6–7, quoting from the Form of Concord.

[16] Page 5.

[17] Page 2.

[18] Page 3. "Again, a quarter of a century after Luther's death, these [Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles] and other writings of Luther and Melanchthon, together with another work which neither

Luther himself, together with his co-workers, moreover, changed their views on some subjects in later confessional statements, teaching, for example, in the Smalcald Articles purer views than some of those set forth in the Augsburg Confession.[19] Again, it is pointed out that "the entire Lutheran Church of Germany has rejected the symbolical books as a whole," [20] and that "our fathers in this country also more than half a century ago, ceased to require a pledge to any of these books, whilst they still believed and in various ways avowed the great fundamental doctrines contained in them. . . ." [21]

As a confessional standard for agreement the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church are far too bulky. They tend to bind the consciences of men and suppress that freedom in biblical inquiry, which Luther had laid down as one of his reformatory principles.[22]

The extraordinary length of the other former symbolic books as a whole, is sufficient reason for their rejection as a prescribed creed, even if all their contents were believed to be true; because neither the Scriptures nor the practice of the early centuries, affords any warrant for an uninspired and therefore fallible creed nearly as large as the entire Old and New Testament together. The exaction of such an extended creed, is subversive of all individual liberty of thought and freedom of Scriptural investigation.[23]

of them ever saw, the Form of Concord, were made binding on ministers and churches, not by the church herself, acting of her own free choice, but by the civil authorities of certain kingdoms and principalities."

[19] Page 3. "Subsequently, Luther and his coadjutors still further changed their views on some subjects in that Confession [the Augsburg Confession], such as the Mass; and seven years later taught purer views in the Smalcald Articles."

[20] Page 4.

[21] Page 4.

[22] (*Cf.*, *ante*, pp. 106–107; 141.)

[23] Page 20.

To be bound to these writings is to act contrary to Luther's own declaration in respect to the confessional statements which preceded him. The Bible alone, he insisted, is ever the source-book and the test of any formal declaration. No matter how reverently such human expositions have been held, they must not take precedence of a direct study of the Scriptures.[24]

The one Confession around which the Lutheran Church has rallied is that written by Melanchthon and approved by Luther, presented before the Diet at Augsburg in 1530. This confessional statement, the Augsburg Confession, "alone has been acknowledged by the entire Lutheran Church".[25] As such, then, it alone deserves the unique place as a doctrinal basis for Lutheran churches in this country. But as simple as this might seem, the document is not content to print this venerable Lutheran Confession *in toto;* but it presents that confession under a revised form to be known as the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession". No longer, then, is the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the distinctly Lutheran creed, to be subscribed by the district synods of the General Synod of American Lutheran Churches. It is the Augsburg Confession, revised in 1855, as herein presented, which is now to be acknowledged as containing the distinctive Lutheran doctrines, and the basis for fellowship.

[24] Luther is quoted in the Smalcald Articles: *"We ought . . . not to form articles of faith out of the words or works of the Fathers; otherwise their diet, their kinds of dress, their houses, &., would have to be made articles of faith, as men have sported with the relics of saints. But we have another rule, namely, that the* WORD OF GOD *forms articles of faith, and no one else,* NOT EVEN AN ANGEL." Page 20 (Part II).

[25] Page 4.

Startling as this may seem, the preface of the Definite Synodical Platform points out that this "American Recension" "adds not a single sentence to the Augsburg Confession, nor omits anything that has the least pretension to be considered 'a fundamental doctrine of Scripture' ".[26] It is further frankly stated that such omissions that are now made are necessitated by the fact that the Augsburg Confession of 1530 contains certain doctrines "which have long since been regarded by the great mass of our churches as unscriptural, and as remnants of Romish error." [27] There are five such errors contained in the venerable Lutheran confession:

1. The Approval of the Ceremonies of the Mass.
2. Private Confession and Absolution.
3. Denial of the Divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath.
4. Baptismal Regeneration.
5. The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Savior in the Eucharist.[28]

These doctrinal errors are now to be omitted in the draft of the present confessional platform. "With these few exceptions, we retain the entire Augsburg Confession, with all the great doctrines of the Reformation." [29]

Such a program as outlined is not a novel one, the document insists. For the Lutheran Church of Germany which rejected the symbolical books as a whole "also abandoned some of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, among others the far greater part of

[26] Page 2.
[27] Pages 4–5.
[28] Page 5.
[29] Page 5.

them the doctrine of the bodily presence of the Savior in the Eucharist''; [30] and, what is more, the fathers of the Lutheran Church in this country ''more than half a century ago,'' having ''ceased to require a pledge to any of these books,'' [31] held only fundamental doctrines of the historic confessions. ''About a quarter of a century ago'' the General Synod (after having been organized around a constitution which required no pledge to these books)[32] ''introduced a qualified acknowledgment of the Augsburg Confession, in the Constitution of her Theological Seminary, and in her Constitution for District Synods, at the ordination and licensure of ministers, without specifying the doctrines to be omitted, except by the designation that they are not fundamental doctrines of Scripture.'' [33] This Definite Synodical Platform then, will be found to be ''perfectly consistant with the doctrinal test of the General Synod'' [34] as that test is found in Chapter 18, paragraph 5, and Chapter 19, paragraph 2, of the ''Formula of Government and Discipline''.[35] It has, therefore, been the policy of the General Synod, in this ''qualified acknowledgment'' [36] of that confession, to grant freedom to each district synod within her fellowship in the matter; ''without specifying the doctrines to be omitted.'' [37]

[30] Page 4.

[31] *Ante,* p. 193. For the substantiation of the claim, see *ante,* Chs. I–II.

[32] *Ante,* pp. 37–39.

[33] Page 4. For the substantiation of this claim, see *ante,* pp. 78–84.

[34] Page 2.

[35] *Ante,* pp. 82–84.

[36] Page 4.

[37] Page 4. "The General Synod has left this matter optional with each district Synod".

Such a position in this larger body of American Lutherans with regard to the Augsburg Confession these years has created a confused situation. On the one hand there is to be found a group of Lutheran ministers and churches that insist upon subscription not only to the Augsburg Confession *in toto,* but also favoring a return to the entire mass of the historic Lutheran Symbols; on the other hand, there is to be seen a general doctrinal uncertainty among many of those within the General Synod as to the question of fundamentals. The situation demands a more definite doctrinal platform: one which will interpret the spirit characterizing the fathers of the American Lutheran Church and which will meet the present demands of a more concrete expression of the doctrinal tenets held "by the great mass of the ministers and churches of the General Synod, in this country." [38]

This Definite Synodical Platform has then been provoked by the need to set forth "to the cause of truth, as well as to ourselves and to the public," [39] "a more specific expression of the General Synod's doctrinal basis"; [40] "to specify more minutely what tenets of the Augsburg Confession, and of the former symbolic system are rejected, some by all, others by the great mass of the ministers and churches of the General Synod, in this country"; [41] and to present "a correct exhibition of the Scripture doctrines".[42]

The document aims then to be specific. Its title as-

[38] Page 4.
[39] Page 4.
[40] Page 2.
[41] Page 4.
[42] Page 5.

sumes this responsibility: a *Definite* Synodical Platform. A revised form of the universally accepted Lutheran Confession is printed with Article XI entirely omitted, together with the omission of such references in the Confession to the five doctrines considered now as "errors",[43] as well as the omission of nearly all of the condemnatory clauses. The second part of the Confession of 1530 which deals with "Articles in Which Are Enumerated the Abuses Corrected", including Articles XXII–XXVIII, are also omitted in this American Recension. The conclusion found in the original form of the Confession after Article XXVIII is here presented in an abridged form after Article XXI.[44]

The Platform, however, adopts the plan of the unabridged Confession in presenting a separate division —a "Part II" with the caption, "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected."[45] The errors listed and discussed here are those five found in the Augsburg Confession of 1530 together with errors found in other Lutheran Symbolical Books, which are to be rejected. The following topics are discussed in the Platform in this second part:

Topic I Ceremonies of the Mass.
Topic II Exorcism.
Topic III Private Confession and Absolution.
Topic IV The Denial of the Divine Institution and Obligation of the Christian Sabbath.
Topic V Baptismal Regeneration.

[43] *Ante,* p. 195.
[44] Page 19.
[45] Page 20, corresponding with Part II of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 where Abuses have been corrected. *Definite Synodical Platform,* First edition.

Topic VI The Outward Form of Baptism.
Topic VII Errors Concerning the Personal or Hypostatic Union of the Two Natures in Christ.
Topic VIII The Supposed Special Sin-Forgiving Power of the Lord's Supper.
Topic IX The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.[46]

The first error found in the Augsburg Confession is that of "The Approval of the Ceremonies of the Mass".[47] The reasons given for counting this doctrine an error are discussed under Topic I, "Ceremonies of the Mass"; viz., the Reformers themselves rejected this doctrine a few years after the publication of the Confession,[48] and "the Lutheran Church, both in Europe and America, has unanimously repudiated alike the Mass and its Ceremonies as a Romish superstition".[49] As proof that a change of mind did come over the Reformers on this doctrine, the Platform cites a passage from the "*Augsburg Confession,* Art. 24, or Topic 3 of the Abuses Corrected",[50] together with two passages from the "Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Art. XII":[51]

It is unjustly charged against our churches, that they have abolished the Mass. For it is notorious that the Mass is celebrated

[46] Pages 21–42.
[47] Page 5; *ante,* p. 195.
[48] Page 21.
[49] Page 21.
[50] Pages 21–22.
[51] The passages quoted in this discussion of "List of Symbolical Errors Rejected" "themselves are generally taken from the revised edition of the Symbolical books published in Newmarket, Va., 1854, which we found it necessary in a few cases to correct by its original, the German. Only the extracts from the *Abuses Corrected* were taken from Schmucker's Lutheran Manual. In these extracts, we have, in each case, given only as much as was necessary to present the doctrine in question." Pages 20–21.

among us with greater devotion and seriousness than by our opponents. Our people are also instructed repeatedly, and with the utmost diligence, concerning the design and proper mode of receiving the holy sacrament; namely to comfort alarmed consciences; by which means the people are attracted to the communion *and the mass.* We at the same time give instruction against other erroneous doctrines concerning the sacrament. In the public ceremonies of the mass, also, no other perceptible change has been made than that at several places German hymns are sung along with the Latin, in order to instruct and exercise the people; since all ceremonies are chiefly designed to teach the people what it is necessary for them to know concerning Christ.

In the first place, we must mention, by way of introduction, that we do not abolish the mass; for mass is held in our churches on every Sunday and festival, when the Sacrament is administered to those who desire it, but only after they have been examined and absolved. Besides, Christian ceremonies are likewise observed, in reading, singing, praying, &c.

We have shown in our Confession, that we hold that the Eucharist or the mass does not confer grace, *ex opere operato,* and that mass, performed for others, does not merit for them the remission of sins, of punishment, and guilt. And for this position, we have the strong and indubitable grounds, that it is impossible for us to obtain the forgiveness of sin through our works, *ex opere operato,*—that is, through the performed work in itself, *sine bono motu utentis,* without regard to the disposition of the mind, or though there be no good emotion in the heart.[52]

These two passages represent the *earlier* views of the Reformers expressing "tolerant views of the Mass".[53] The "following extract from the Smalcald Articles, written seven years later",[54] represents the *later* views of the Reformers on this subject:

That the Mass in the Papal Church, must be the greatest and most terrible abomination, since it is directly and strongly opposed to

[52] Cited passages quoted from Pages 21–22.
[53] Page 22.
[54] Page 22.

this chief article (of justification through faith in Christ); and yet, of all papal idolatries, it was the most embellished and applauded. For it was maintained that such offering, or work of the Mass, even when performed by the most artful knave, liberates man from sins, both in this life and in purgatory—a thing which the Lamb of God alone can do, as already said. No part of this article can be yielded or rescinded; for the first article will not allow it. But if there be a rational Papist anywhere, we might speak to him in the following friendly manner:—*First,* Why do you still adhere so strenuously to the Mass, since it is a mere human device, not commanded of God? And we may safely abandon all human device, as Christ (Matt. 15: 9) says: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Fourthly, Inasmuch as incalculable and inexpressible abuses, resulting from the mercenary purposes to which the Mass has been devoted, have obtained in all the world, it should be discontinued for the purpose of restricting these abuses alone, even if the Mass itself had something useful and good in it. How much rather, then, should we suffer it to cease, in order to prevent such abuses perpetually, since it is entirely unnecessary, useless, and dangerous, and since we can have every thing necessary and useful, with certainty, without the Mass. *Fifthly,* As the Mass neither is, nor can be, anything else—as the canons and all the books declare—but a work of man (even of artful knaves), by which each one wishes to reconcile himself and others to God, and to merit and obtain grace and remission of sins; for so, even at best, it is regarded—and how could it be otherwise? Consequently, we should and must condemn and reject it. For this is directly in opposition to the chief article, which declares that neither a wicked nor a pious performer of Mass, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God bears our sins.[55]

The Platform cites no proof for its second contention, viz., that the mass and its ceremonies were repudiated unanimously by the Lutheran Church in Europe and America. The passages given "afford reason enough why we cannot receive the Augsburg Confession without qualification."[56]

[55] Cited from Pages 22–23.
[56] Page 21.

The second error found in the Augsburg Confession and omitted in the new revision is that of "Private Confession and Absolution".[57] Topic III, under the "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected", entitled "Private Confession and Absolution", contains a discussion of this doctrine. The reasons given for the omission *in toto* of Article XI "Of Confession" (Latin, *De Confessione;* German, *Von der Beichte*)[58] and other related passages in the Augsburg Confession[59] are: (1) there is no Scriptural warrant for such a rite;[60]

[57] Page 5. List of errors contained in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. *Ante*, p. 195.

[58] Article XI of the Augsburg Confession (of 1530): "In reference to confession it is taught, that private absolution ought to be retained in the church, and should not be discontinued; in confession, however, it is unnecessary to enumerate all transgressions and sins, which indeed is not possible. Psalm 19: 12 'Who can understand his errors?'" Page 25.

[59] The following extracts from the "Abuses Corrected" of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 are also set down in the Platform, as deserving rejection. From Article XXV: "Confession is not abolished by our ministers. For the custom is retained among us, not to administer the Sacrament unto those who have not been previously examined and absolved. The people, moreover, are diligently instructed with regard to the comfort afforded by the words of absolution, and the high and great estimation in which it is to be held; for it is not the voice or word of the individual present, but it is the word of God, who here forgives sins; for it is spoken in God's stead, and by his command. Concerning this command and power of the keys, it is taught with the greatest assiduity how comfortable, how useful they are to alarmed consciences, and besides how God requires confidence in this absolution, no less than if the voice of God was heard from heaven; and by this we comfort ourselves, and know that through such faith we obtain the remission of sins."

From Article XXVIII: "Accordingly they teach, that the power of the keys or of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power and commission from God to preach the Gospel, *to remit and to retain sins*." Pages 25–26.

[60] Page 25. "As the Sacred Volume contains not a single command, that laymen should confess their sins to ministers, and any more than ministers to laymen; and as not a single such example of confession and

(2) doctrinally it is dangerous to the religious spirit of the church and to the great Protestant principle "of justification by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ"; [61] (3) it has no place in the way of salvation.

The Platform makes much of this last point:

> The Scriptures, and also the Reformers, teach that pardon or justification can be obtained only through the merits of Christ, which merits must be apprehended by a living faith, which living faith can be found only in the regenerate or converted soul. Hence, as none but a regenerate sinner can exercise living faith, no other can be pardoned, whatever else he may do or possess. Now those who attend confession are either regenerate, or they are not. If they were regenerated or converted before they went to confession, they had faith, and were pardoned before; if they were unregenerate or unconverted, then neither their confession, nor the priest's absolution, can confer pardon on them, because they have not a living faith, although they may be sincere and exercise some sorrow for their sins. On the other hand, if any amount of seriousness and penitence, short of true conversion or regeneration, could, through the confessional, or any other rite, confer pardon of sin; the line of distinction between converted and unconverted, between mere formalists and true Christians would be obliterated; we should have pardoned saints and pardoned sinners in the church, converted and unconverted heirs of the promise, believing and unbelieving subjects of justification, and the words of the Lord Jesus would prove a lie, "That *unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven!*" [62]

The classical passages from the New Testament furnishing an argument to many for the retention of the theory and practice of private confession and absolution are given a brief exegesis in this discussion with

absolution is contained in the Word of God, our American Church has universally repudiated the practice."

[61] Page 26. "How dangerous the entire doctrine of absolution and sinforgiving power of the ministry is, to the spirituality of the church, and to the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, is clearly evident."

[62] Page 26.

the view to show that even here there is lacking Scriptural warrant for such a doctrine and rite:

As to the passage, Matth. 18: 18, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven"; it evidently refers to acts of church discipline, such as "telling it to the church," &c., which are expressly mentioned in the previous part of the passage. And that in John 20: 23, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," was uttered on a different occasion, after the Savior's resurrection; and either refers to a miraculous power bestowed on the apostles to discern the condition of the heart, and to announce pardon of God to truly penitent individuals; or it confers on the ministry, in all ages, the power to announce *in general,* the conditions on which God will pardon sinners; but it contains no authority for applying these promises to individuals, as is done in private absolution.[63]

The Platform distinguishes two types of Confession: "Auricular" and "Private", the one consisting of the practice of "enumerating all our particular sins to the priest at confession,"[64] rejected by Luther and his followers; the other, consisting of the practice of confessing one's "sinfulness and penitence in general"[65] (accompanied with the declaration of absolution), "long retained in the Lutheran Church of Germany, although rejected from the beginning in Sweden and Denmark".[66] That the Lutheran Church in Germany did retain the practice of private confession and absolution, the Platform asserts on the authority of Funk.[67]

[63] Pages 26–27.

[64] Page 24.

[65] Page 24.

[66] "In Sweden and Denmark . . . nothing more than a public confession of the congregation together, before communion, was retained." Page 24.

[67] *Kirchenordnungen* (English title, *The Church Government of the Lutheran Church in the First Century after Her Establishment,* cited

Absolution was received *privately,* by each one, *individually, kneeling* before the *confessional,* the confessor *imposing his hands* at the time. Private confession was given *only in the church,* in which the confessional was so located *near the pulpit,* that *no other person could be near or hear* what was said by the penitent.[68]

The Lutheran Church in America, with the exception of "the old Lutheran Synod of Missouri, consisting entirely of Europeans," "has universally repudiated the practice"[69] of private confession and absolution.

The third error found in the Augsburg Confession[70] is not found in the first twenty-one articles of that Confession; hence it does not affect the new revision offered by the Definite Synodical Platform.[71] It occurs, however, in the twenty-eighth article of that Confession under "Abuses Corrected" and therefore needs consideration. The error is that of the "Denial of the Divine Obligation of the Christian Sabbath", or as Topic IV has it, "The Denial of the Divine Institution and Obligation of the Christian Sabbath".[72]

The passage relating to the Christian Sabbath quoted from Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession reads:

And what are we to believe concerning *Sunday* (the Lord's day), and other similar ordinances and ceremonies of the church? To

on p. 509 by S. S. Schmucker in *Elements of Popular Theology . . .* 5th edition).

[68] Pages 24–25.

[69] Page 25.

[70] *Ante,* p. 195.

[71] The reader is again reminded that the "American Recension" consists only of the first twenty-one articles of the venerable Confession.

[72] Page 5.

this inquiry we reply, the bishops and clergy may make regulations, that order may be observed in the church, not with the view of thereby obtaining the grace of God, nor in order thus to make satisfaction for sins, nor to bind the consciences, to hold and regard this as a necessary worship of God, or to believe that they would commit sin if they violated these regulations without offence to others. Thus St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11: 5), has ordained that women shall have their heads covered in the congregation; also, that the ministers should not all speak at the same time in the congregation, but in an orderly manner, one after another.

It is becoming in a Christian congregation to observe such order, for the sake of love and peace, and to obey the bishops and clergy in these cases, and to observe these regulations so far as not to give offence to one another, so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church. Nevertheless, the consciences of men must not be oppressed, by representing these things as necessary to salvation, or teaching that they are guilty of sin, if they break these regulations without offence to others; for no one affirms that a woman commits sin who goes out with her head uncovered, without giving offence to the people. Such also is the ordinance concerning Sunday, Easter, Whitsunday, and similar festivals and customs. For those who suppose that the ordinance concerning Sunday instead of Sabbath, is enacted as necessary, are greatly mistaken. For the Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath, and teaches that all the ceremonies of the old law may be omitted, since the publication of the gospel. And yet, as it was necessary to appoint a certain day, in order that the people might know when they should assemble, the Christian church has appointed Sunday (the Lord's day) for this purpose; and to this change she was the more inclined and willing, that the people might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observance of neither the Sabbath nor any other day is necessary. There have been numerous erroneous disputations published, concerning the change of the law, the ceremonies of the New Testament, and the change of the Sabbath, which have all sprung from the false and erroneous opinion, that Christians must have such a mode of divine worship as is conformed to the Levitical or Jewish service, and that Christ enjoined it on the apostles and bishops, to invent new ceremonies, which should be necessary to salvation.[73]

[73] Pages 28–29. Readers of the Platform are referred to Dr. Schmucker's *Lutheran Manual,* pp. 306, 307.

Wherever, also in the other Lutheran Symbolical Books, this doctrine of the significance of the Christian Sabbath "is treated as a mere Jewish institution, and supposed to be totally revoked; whilst the propriety of retaining it as a day of religious worship, is supposed to rest only on the agreement of the churches for the convenience of general convocation",[74] the Definite Synodical Platform rejects the position of the Symbolical Books boldly as an "error".

The attitude taken by this document toward the doctrine in question is that "Christians in all ages",[75] following the apostles, are obligated to observe the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's Day, not as a matter of mere convenience but as a day hallowed and divinely instituted. The argument leading to this conclusion runs as follows: (1) The Old Testament had its special day, appointed, set aside, and hallowed by the Creator—"the Old Testament Sabbath".[76] (2) But this day "was not a mere Jewish institution",[77] because it had been appointed "at the close of the creative week",[78] which makes it a pre-Jewish observance.[79] The Mosaic code itself recognizes this fact.[80] (3)

[74] Page 28.
[75] Page 28.
[76] Page 27.
[77] Page 27.
[79] Page 27.
[78] Page 27.

[79] Page 27. The Definite Synodical Platform refers the reader to Gen., 2:2, 3. ("And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made." American Standard Version—Thos. Nelson and Sons.)

[80] Page 27. "Even in the re-enactment of it in the Mosaic code, its original appointment is acknowledged, *'Remember* the Sabbath day—because in six days God made heaven and earth—and rested on the

Hence, this hallowed day "has no more reference to the Jews than to any other nation, and if it was sufficient to make the observance of the Sabbath obligatory on them, it must be equally so for all other nations before and after them."[81] Such an observance "is based on universal reasons in the nature of man, especially as a religious being,"[82] and rests on "the example and precepts of the Creator in the beginning".[83] It is, therefore, divinely instituted and appointed for all people, for all time; and no one, not even in our day, may abrogate its holy observance. However, any ceremonial additions for example, such as found in the Mosaic ritual accruing to ancient observance of the Sabbath Day, may be set aside; but the significance of the Sabbath as a hallowed institution must forever be kept.[84] (4) "The essence of the institution", however, does not lie in a certain day of the week, be it the seventh day or the first, but "consists . . . in the religious observance of one day in seven."[85] To the people of the Old Testament the divinely appointed Sabbath was reverently observed on the seventh day; to the early Christians, "the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week"[86] became the *Christian* Sabbath. (5) Now, then, the Christian Sabbath (*i. e.,* the first or

seventh; wherefore he *(then,* in the beginning,*) blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.'"* (From Exodus, 20:8, 11.)

[81] Page 27.

[82] Page 27.

[83] Page 27.

[84] Page 27. ". . . the Sabbath must be universally obligatory, and the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, can at most only repeal those ceremonial additions which that ritual made, and must leave the original Sabbath as it found it."

[85] Page 28.

[86] Page 27.

Lord's day) becomes "obligatory on Christians in all ages" [87] for two reasons: (a) the Creator, by "example and precepts . . . in the beginning" observed and sanctioned "a portion of his time . . . the proportion of time . . . fixed at a *seventh,*" the institution known as Sabbath appointed for universal practice and reverence; (b) "the apostles, and first Christians *under the inspired guidance*" [88] (although they "for a season also attended worship on the Jewish Sabbath"), "observed the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week, as their day of special religious convocations", *and this their "inspired example"* now fixes the day for all succeeding generations of Christians.[89]

The Christian Sabbath, then, is divinely instituted and therefore obligatory. Further, "our American churches believe in the divine institution and obligation of the Christian Sabbath, or Lord's day".[90]

The fourth error found in the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and omitted in this American Recension is the doctrine of "Baptismal Regeneration".[91] The attitude presented in the Definite Synodical Platform on the question of Christian baptism is discussed under the "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected" in Topic V, entitled "Baptismal Regeneration",[92] and in Topic

[87] Pages 27–28.

[88] The italics are the present author's, as well as in the following instance.

[89] Quotations from Pages 27–28. The author (s) of the document definitely say that though the essence of the institution of the Sabbath "consists, not in the particular day of the week," yet, "that [day] is now fixed". Page 28.

[90] Page 27. No substantiating references on this point are presented in the document.

[91] Page 5. *Ante,* p. 195.

[92] Pages 29–33.

VI, entitled "The Outward Form of Baptism".[93]

The one passage from the unaltered Confession, containing a reference to Baptismal Regeneration set down as to be rejected, is a portion of Article II:

> Our churches teach that this innate disease and original sin, is truly sin, and condemneth all those under the eternal wrath of God, who are not born again by Baptism and the Holy Spirit.[94]

The other rejected passages containing references to the approval of this doctrine and set down in this discussion come from the other Lutheran Symbolical Books:[95]

From the Apology to Augsburg Confession:

> Our opponents also agree to the ninth article, in which we confess that Baptism is necessary to salvation, and that the baptism of infants is not fruitless, but necessary and salutary.

From Luther's Smaller Catechism:

> *What does Baptism confer or benefit? Ans.*—It effects the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and confers everlasting salvation upon all who believe it, as the words and promises of God declare.
>
> *How can water effect such great things? Ans.*—Indeed it is not the water that has such effect, but the word of God that is with and in the water, and the faith trusting such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is mere water, hence no baptism; but with the word of God it constitutes a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life, and a washing of regeneration, in the Holy Ghost.

From Luther's Larger Catechism:

[93] Pages 33–35.

[94] Page 32.

[95] The following quotations from Pages 32–33. See *ante*, p. 199, footnote 51.

Every Christian, therefore, has enough to learn and practice in Baptism during his life; for he must ever exert himself to maintain a firm faith in what it promises and brings him, namely, triumph over the devil and death, the remission of sins, the grace of God, Christ with all his works, and the Holy Ghost with all his gifts. In short, the blessings of Baptism are so great, that if feeble nature could but comprehend them we might justly doubt their reality. For, imagine to yourself a physician, who possessed an art preventing persons from dying; or, even if they died, immediately restoring them to life so as to live eternally afterwards, how the world would rush and flock around him with money, while the poor, prevented by the rich, could not approach him! And yet, here in Baptism, every one has such a treasure and medicine gratuitously brought to his door—a medicine which abolishes death, and preserves all men to eternal life.

It (baptism) is, therefore, very appropriately called food for the soul, which flourishes and strengthens the new man; *for through Baptism we are born anew;* but beside this, the old vicious nature in the flesh and blood nevertheless adheres to man, in which there are so many impediments and obstacles, with which we are opposed as well by the devil as by the world, so that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes stumble.

From the Visitation Articles:[96]

By baptism as the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, God saves us, and works in us such righteousness and purification from sins, that whosoever perseveres in such covenant and reliance, will not be lost, but have eternal life.[97]

Baptism is the bath (laver) of regeneration, *because in it we are regenerated,* and sealed with the spirit of sonship and obtain pardon.[98]

Such passages as these, together with the quotation from Article II of the unaltered Augsburg Confession,

[96] Following is a comment on these "Visitation Articles": "published fourteen years after the other Symbolical books for the purpose of explaining their true import, and then made binding in Saxony". Page 33.

[97] From Par. II, Art. III, "On Baptism".

[98] From Par. IV, Art. III, "On Baptism".

with their avowal of "the doctrine that baptism is necessarily and invariably attended by spiritual regeneration; and that such water baptism is unconditionally essential to salvation",[99] are strongly criticized in this discussion of confessional errors. "Baptismal regeneration, either in infants or adults, is . . . a doctrine not taught in the word of God, and fraught with much injury to the souls of men" [100]—this is the position definitely taken by the author(s) of this document.

In the case of adults, it is insisted, salvation consists of *"faith in Christ"*. This faith is "the necessary prerequisite to baptism".[101] Mark, 16:16 is quoted: "He that *believeth* and is baptised shall be saved, and he that *believeth* not, shall be damned". Acts, 8:37 is also quoted: "If thou *believest* with all thy heart thou mayest be baptised"; also Acts, 2:38: *"Repent* and be baptised".[102] Without this faith, persons may be "damned notwithstanding their baptism".[103] With such a faith *preceding,* baptism is presented in the Scriptures "as a rite by which those who had already consecrated themselves to Christ, or been converted, made a public profession of the fact, received a pledge of the divine favor, or of forgiveness of sins, and were admitted to membership in the visible church." [104] In other words, "Baptism in *adults,* is a

[99] Page 29.

[100] Page 31.

[101] Page 29.

[102] Page 29. Matthew, 16:16 is given in the document instead of Mark, 16:16. Evidently a misprint.

[103] Page 29.

[104] Page 29. Further elucidation of the point of view here presented is given in two examples from the Scriptures: in the case of Nicodemus

means of making a public profession of previous faith, or of being received into the visible church, as well as a pledge and condition of obtaining those blessings purchased by Christ, and offered to all who repent, believe in him, and profess his name by baptism." [105] "It follows", then, "that baptism was not, and is not, a converting ordinance in adults, and does not necessarily effect or secure their regeneration." [106]

In the case of infants, it is stated as "self-evident" [107] that "baptism cannot accomplish more in infants than in adults, . . . hence if it is not a converting ordinance in adults, it cannot be in infants." [108] What effects baptism has upon the infant-child "are nowhere specified in Scripture". [109] It is therefore concluded that "we must suppose them [*i. e.*, the effects of baptism] to be the same as in adults, so far as children are naturally capable of them." [110] "Of

and that of Paul; "The language of the Savior to Nicodemus, John 3: 6, '*Unless a man be born of water and the spirit,*' doubtless refers also to baptism, which had been known to the Jews, and practiced by John the Baptist, before the ministry of Christ, as a mode of *public reception* of proselytes, who were then said to be new born. Its import is to inform Nicodemus, that he must *publicly* profess the religion of Jesus by baptism, and also be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, if he desired to enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus, also, the words, Acts 22:16, '*Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins,*' were addressed to Paul *after* he had surrendered himself to Christ, and signifies: 'Arise, and publicly profess Christ by baptism, and thus complete your dedication of yourself to his cause, the condition, on the sincere performance of which, God will for Christ's sake, pardon your sins.'" Page 31.

105 Pages 30–31.
106 Page 29.
107 Page 30.
108 Pages 29–30.
109 Page 30.
110 Page 30.

regeneration, in the proper sense of the term, infants are incapable; for it consists in a radical change in our religious views of the divine character, law, &c.; a change in our religious feelings, and in our religious purposes and habits of action; of none of which are children capable."[111] "Baptism in *infants"* is to be regarded as "the pledge of the bestowment of those blessings purchased by Christ for all. . . .[112] These blessings are forgiveness of sins, or exemption from the penal consequences of natural depravity, (which would at least be exclusion from heaven on account of moral disqualification for admission,) reception into the visible church of Christ, grace to help in every time of need, and special provision for the nurture and admonition in the Lord, to which parents pledge themselves."[113]

Since the issue is on a particular theory of baptism, viz., that of baptismal regeneration, the author (s) of the Platform discuss this "error" further, and in more detail. When a person is born anew, or regenerated, this is in evidence, by an increasing power to resist the impulses of the natural man. Such an experience is possible only to those who have reached the age of moral responsibility. Being regenerated does not imply the destruction of man's evil propensities, but only a powerful disposition to subdue them.[114] A bit of

[111] Page 30.

[112] To support this statement, reference is made in the document (by quotation) to 1 Cor. 15: 22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Also to Acts, 2:39: "The promise is to you and your *children".* Page 31.

[113] Page 31.

[114] "As regeneration does not destroy but merely restrains the natural depravity, or innate, sinful dispositions of the Christian, (for

psychology is presented in this discussion, viz., where reference is made to the growing powers of habit on the individual, produced by a volition which follows the line of least resistance, the line laid down by inherited dispositions. Habits are made strong by repeated actions; these actions are the result of a volition motivated by a deeper, natural driving power.[115] A regenerated person is one who finds himself resisting his natural disposition to sin *by cutting in on these ever-increasing tenacious habits.*[116] The "preponderance of *sinful habits*" then are thwarted and reduced through a radical change in one's views and feelings which accompany the experience of being born again, or regenerated.[117] The continued resistance of the solicitations of the natural man, together with the establishment of the "preponderance of holy habits", "constitutes" regeneration in the child.[118] The more

these still remain in him after conversion,) it must consist mainly in a change of that *increased* predisposition to sin arising from action, of that preponderance of *sinful habits* formed by voluntary indulgence of our natural depravity, after we have reached years of moral agency." Page 30.

[115] The point of view strongly suggests to the modern reader a kinship with that heralded by the new school of dynamic psychology in England which places such an emphasis on the driving power of instincts. The term "instinct" is not here used, although the idea is present in such terms as "innate sinful propensities", "innate sinful dispositions", "predisposition to sin". The entire discussion strongly suggests a work which appeared thirteen years before, under the title, *Psychology, or, Elements of a New System of Mental Philosophy, on the Basis of Consciousness and Common Sense; Designed for Colleges and Academies,* published in a first edition in 1842. The author of the *Psychology* was Professor S. S. Schmucker, Harper & Bros., New York.

[116] Page 30.

[117] Page 30.

[118] "If the child, by the grace of God and proper religious instruction, continues to resist the solicitations of its depraved nature, its con-

firmly the sinful habits are fixed, the more striking will be the experience of regeneration.[119]

Now, it is not possible to speak of regeneration "in the proper sense of the term" *in infants,* since, as above remarked, they are incapable of a radical change in religious views and feelings, and since they cannot be said to have "*habits* of sin prior to moral agency". Since in this pre-moral state it is not possible to speak of *habits of sin,* and since regeneration consists in a change from the preponderance of sinful habits, it follows that no regeneration takes place in infants.[120] "The child, on its first attainment of moral agency, has merely natural depravity, until by voluntary indulgence in sin, it contracts personal guilt, and forms habits of sinful action." [121] It follows from this discussion of the meaning of regeneration, that, even if regeneration were effected by the Christian baptism upon adults (which the author(s) of the document deny), no such effect could be produced upon infants, since they are "*naturally incapable*" of the experience involved in regeneration.[122]

tinued obedience will form holy habits, and this preponderance of holy habits, when established, constitutes its regeneration."

[119] "If the growing child, as its powers of moral agency are developed, for any reason indulges its innate sinful propensities, it becomes a confirmed sinner; and its subsequent regeneration, if it take place, will be the more striking, as its change of habits must be the greater." Page 30.

[120] "But infants have no such *increased* predisposition, no *habits* of sin prior to moral agency, consequently there can be no change of them, no regeneration in this meaning of the term." Page 30.

[121] Page 30.

[122] "Hence if baptism even did effect regeneration in adults which we have proved it does not, still it could have no such influence on infants, as they are *naturally incapable* of the mental exercises involved in it." Page 30.

The author(s) of the document frankly confess that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was held in the Lutheran Church of Europe; yet, by many, the greater part of the passages relating to this subject found in the historical Symbolical Books are interpreted and may be interpreted to mean no more than that here presented.[123]

A special discussion follows under Topic VI[124] on "The Outward Form of Baptism".[125] Since this does not concern any dispute with the Augsburg Confession itself, the topic will be reviewed later in this chapter, where those doctrinal errors found in the other historical symbols are discussed.[126]

The fifth error found in the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and omitted in the American Recension is the doctrine of "The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Savior in the Eucharist".[127] The attitude of the author(s) of the Definite Synodical Platform toward this doctrine is discussed under the "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected" in Topic IX, entitled "The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist".

The one passage from the unaltered Confession containing a reference to this doctrine, set down as now to be definitely rejected, is Article X:

[123] "At the same time, whilst the doctrine of baptismal regeneration certainly did prevail in our European churches, it is proper to remark, that the greater part of the passages in the former symbols relating to this subject, are, and doubtless may be explained by many, to signify no more than we above inculcate." Page 31.

[124] *Cf. ante,* pp. 209–210.

[125] Pages 33–35.

[126] Topic VI presented on p. 225 ff. of this study.

[127] Page 5. *Ante,* p. 195.

Concerning the holy Supper of the Lord it is taught, that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present, under the form of bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, and are there administered and received.[128]

The reasons given for the rejection of the doctrine of the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, as taught in the tenth article and in other of the Symbolical Books, are: (1) Such a doctrine is not taught in Scripture. The passage, "This is my body", so frequently appealed to, cannot support this view, for it is plainly figurative.[129] (2) The ordinance of the Supper was designed by Christ as a memorial to a past event, attested to by Paul in the words, "To show, or publish, the Lord's death". The bread and the wine, then, are the emblems through which "we come into the communion with, or are reminded of, the Lord's body and blood".[130] Such a doctrine as the real presence of the Body and Blood is therefore not suggested in the idea of a memorial which implies "that which is past and absent." (3) Such

[128] Page 40. (This quotation is acknowledged as taken from p. 112 of the Symbolical Books, published in Newmarket, Va., 1854. See also Pages 20, 21 of the *Definite Synodical Platform.*)

[129] "For this view we find no authority in Scripture. (*a*) On the contrary, when Christ uttered the words: 'This (bread) is my body,' his body was *not yet dead*, but was reclining at their side at the table; and therefore was certainly not received by them into their mouths. The language was therefore figurative, such as Jesus was wont often to employ. Again, 'I am the *door*,' John 10:9. 'I am the *true vine*,' 15: 1. 'The *field* is the *world*,' 'the *seed* is the word,' &c." Page 39.

[130] "Christ himself exhorts us, 'Do this in *remembrance* of me:' but remembrance is applicable only to that which is past and absent. Paul also represents the design of this ordinance to be, 'To show, or publish, the Lord's death,' a *past* event and not a present person. Thus we come into the communion with, or are reminded of, the Lord's body and blood through the emblems of bread and wine." Page 39.

a doctrine, moreover, "contradicts the clear and indisputable testimony of our senses".[131] (4) It is incompatible with our knowledge of matter as occupying but one place at a given time; for the doctrine implies that the body and blood are truly and substantially received by communicants anywhere at the same time.[132]

The Reformers, indeed, rejected the theory of transubstantiation taught in the Roman Church but held on to this mystical doctrine of the presence of "the real body and blood" of Christ in the Supper and "received by the mouth of every communicant, worthy or unworthy";[133] although Melanchthon himself and others were later disposed to reject the doctrine.[134]

To proclaim this doctrine as an error in the Augsburg Confession, as is done in this Platform, is not startling or new. We remind ourselves only of the growing conviction, gained "during the first quarter

[131] "It contradicts the clear and indisputable testimony of our senses, for as the body and blood are to be received by the *mouth* of the communicant, it *must* be a *local* and *material reception*, which, if it did occur, at sacramental celebrations, could be observed by the senses." Page 39.

[132] "It contradicts the observation of all nations and ages, that, every body or material substance, must occupy a definite portion of space, and cannot be at more than one place at the same time, and therefore not at a hundred different places where the communion is received at the same time." Page 40.

[133] "The Reformers justly rejected the Romish error, that the bread and wine were transformed and transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. But they still adhered to the opinion, that the real body and blood of the Savior are present at the Eucharist, in some mysterious way, and are received by the mouth of every communicant, worthy or unworthy." Page 39.

[134] "The disposition to reject this error was manifested by Melanchthon himself, and it prevailed extensively in the latter third of the sixteenth century." Page 40.

of this century'' on the part of ''the great mass of the whole Lutheran Church'', to reject ''the doctrine of the real presence''. All this before the year 1817.[135] The great majority of the Lutheran ministers and churches of the General Synod thus have already given up teaching such a view of the sacrament.[136] Therefore, not only the tenth article of the unaltered Augsburg Confession should be openly rejected, but also such passages, found in the historical Lutheran symbolical books, as the following: [137]

From the Apology to the Augsburg Confession:

> Our adversaries (the Romanists) do not object to the tenth article (of the Augsburg Confession), in which we confess that the body and blood of Christ our Lord, are truly present in the holy Supper, and administered and received with the visible elements, the bread and wine, as hitherto maintained in the (Romish) church, and as the Greek Canon shows.[138]

From the Smalcald Articles:

> Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, we hold that the bread and wine in the Eucharist, are the true body and blood of Christ, which are administered and received not only by pious, but also by impious Christians.[139]

From Luther's Smaller Catechism:

[135] "But during the first quarter of this century, the conviction that our Reformers did not purge away the whole of the Romish error from this doctrine, gained ground, universally, until the great mass of the whole Lutheran Church, before the year 1817, had rejected the doctrine of the real presence." Page 40. *Cf. ante*, Chapters I and II.

[136] "For these and other reasons the great mass of our ministers and churches reject this doctrine, and the annexed passages of the former symbolical books in which it is taught." Page 40.

[137] The following quotations from Pages 40–42. See *ante*, p. 199, footnote 51.

[138] Designated Art. VII., VIII (IV).

[139] Article VI.

What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Ans. It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink.

From the Form of Concord:

We teach that the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly and essentially, or substantially, present in the Lord's Supper, administered with the bread and wine, and received with the lips, by all those who use this sacrament, be they worthy or unworthy, good or evil, believing or unbelieving; being received by the believing unto consolation and life, but by the unbelieving unto judgment.

We believe, teach, and confess, that the words of the testament of Christ, are not to be understood otherwise than according to their literal sense, so that the bread does not signify the absent body of Christ, and the wine, the absent blood of Christ, but on account of their sacramental union, *that the bread and wine* ARE *truly the body and blood of Christ.*

We believe, teach, and confess, that not only the truly believing and the worthy, but also the unworthy and the unbelieving, receive the true body and blood of Christ.[140]

"In addition to the above clear passages, incontestably teaching the real presence, it deserves to be ever remembered, that only fourteen years after the Form of Concord was published, when Duke Frederick William, during the minority of Christian II., published the Visitation Articles of Saxony, in 1594, in order to suppress the Melanchthonian tendencies to reject this and other peculiarities of the symbols, the Article on this subject which was framed by men confessedly adhering to the old symbols, and designing to reënunciate their true import, and which was enforced upon the whole church in Saxony as symbolic, gives the most objectionable view of this doctrine, viz.:

[140] Designated Pt. I, Art. VII.

"I. 'The pure doctrine of our Church is, that the words, *'Take and eat, this is my body: drink, this is my blood,* are to be understood *simply and according to the letter.'*

"II. That the body (which is received and eaten) is the *proper* and *natural body* (der rechte naturliche Leib) of Christ, *which hung upon the cross;* and the blood (which is drunk) is the *proper* and *natural blood* (das rechte naturliche Blut) *which flowed from the side of Christ.'* [141]

Now we cannot persuade ourselves, that this is the view of a single minister of the General Synod, or of many out of it; and yet these are the views that those are obligated to receive who avow implicit allegiance to the former symbolical books of our Church in Europe. If any adopt the modification received by many of our distinguished divines, such as Reinhardt and others, they do not faithfully embrace the symbolical doctrine, and cannot fairly profess to do so." [142]

These, then, are the five errors contained in the Confession of 1530, rejected by the Definite Synodical Platform [143] and discussed at length under the "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected".[144] When the same erroneous doctrines have been found in the other symbolical books, these passages have likewise been set down. There now remain such doctrines considered by the author(s) of the document as erroneous *which are not found in the Augsburg Confession,* but only in other of the Lutheran symbolical books. These are: (1) "Exorcism" (discussed under Topic II of the "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected"); (2) "The Outward Form of Baptism" (discussed under Topic VI);

[141] Reference is made to Müller's *Symbolical Books,* p. 847.
[142] Quoted in full from Pages 41–42.
[143] *Ante,* p. 195.
[144] *Ante,* pp. 198–199.

(3) "Errors Concerning the Personal or Hypostatic Union of the Two Natures in Christ" (discussed under Topic VII); and (4) "The Supposed Special Sin-Forgiving Power of the Lord's Supper" (discussed under Topic VIII). These doctrines are presented to show further that Lutherans have not always held to all the views printed in their confessional Books.

Exorcism [145] is the "superstitious practice, which consists in a prescribed formula of adjuration, accompanied by various menacing demonstrations, by the use of which the priest professes to expel the evil spirits from an individual, of whom they are supposed to have taken possession".[146] This rite "was practiced in the Romish church principally before the baptism of infants." [147] For a considerable time, the Lutheran Church in Europe, in some places, retained the practice, although giving to it "an altered interpretation".[148] In the edition of 1529 of the Smaller Catechism, for example, the rite is expressly taught in the supplement of "Luther's Directory for Baptism". Likewise, the rite appears in the older printed editions of the Lutheran Symbolical Books, "including the very first in 1580". Recent editions also contain references to "this superstitious practice".[149]

145 Pages 23–24.

146 Page 23.

147 Page 23.

148 Page 23.

149 The rite is found in the edition of the Symbolical Books "recently published by Ludwig of New York, and many others of modern date." "For particulars" the reader is referred to "Schmucker's *History of the American Lutheran Church*, p. 237–8, 5th ed.", Page 24. The reference here given is to the volume entitled, *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses*, by S. S. Schmucker, D.D., (Fifth Edition), Phila., 1852, and reads (pp. 237–9):

The following extract on the rite of Exorcism is rejected:

The officiating minister shall say:

"Come out thou unclean spirit! And give place to the Holy Spirit."

Then he is to make a cross on the forehead and breast of the subject, and say:

"Receive the sign of the Holy Cross, on both your forehead and breast."

Then, after prayer, he shall say:

"Let the reader, who is in doubt [that Exorcism was taught by Lutherans in Europe] examine Luther's Smaller Catechism, in the edition of the symbolical books, published by Mr. Ludwig, of New York, a year or two ago, and now patronized by the old Lutherans of the West, he will find this Taufbuchlein in full. . . . If he will examine that very extensively circulated edition of the Symbolical Books, edited by the learned Dr. Baumgarten, of Halle, published in 1747, he will find the very same directions on p. 467; and also in the Leipsic edition of 1790, p. 610. If he will examine the very first edition of the Concordienbuch, or Authentic Collection of the Symbolic Books ever published, printed at Dresden, in 1580, he will find it there, on p. 170–173. And that Luther is its author, is not denied by any one who has examined the subject. He first translated it from a previously existing Romish Latin directory in 1523, (Funk's *Kirchenordnungen*, p. 124.) In this form it is found in the Jen. ed. of his work, vol. II., p. 248–252. In 1524 or 1526, he rewrote it in the form in which it was added to the Catechism edited by himself in 1529, (Müller Symbolic books, p. 88, 89 of Introduction,) and is found in the Altenb. ed. of his works, Fom. II., fol. 327. See Kollner, vol. I., p. 501, 502, and Baumgarten's Introduction to the Symbolic books, p. 166. . . . But directions for exorcism were also inserted into some of the Kirchenordnungen or directories for worship in the different provinces of Germany. Luther and Melanchthon always retained exorcism, as did a large portion of the Lutheran Church in Germany, and *the entire Church in Sweden.* Yea, during the 17th century, a rigid adherence to this superstitious rite was regarded in many portions of the Church, as a special mark of fidelity to Lutheranism. . . . Yet it is true, and we rejoice that it is so, that a large part of the Lutheran Church was at an early day ashamed of this remnant of papal superstition, and rejected it. Especially in the Latin copies destined for the learned, it was most generally omitted. It was excluded from the second edition of the Concordienbuch, also printed in 1580, out of regard to the Churches of the Electoral Palitinate, which had rejected the practice . . . It was received into the very first

"I adjure thee, thou unclean spirit, by (bei) *the name of the Father* (making a cross), *and of the Son* (another cross), *and of the Holy Ghost* (another cross), *that thou come out and depart from the servant of Jesus Christ."* [150]

It is further stated in the Definite Synodical Platform that "in the American Lutheran Church it [exorcism] was never received, and is regarded as unscriptural, and highly objectionable, under the most favorable explanation that can be given of it." [151]

The Outward Form of Baptism.[152] The author(s) of the document point out three passages from the Symbolic Books containing views on the method of baptism "as inconsistent with our views" [153] and now worthy of definite rejection. These are:
From Luther's Large Catechism:

In the last place, it is also necessary to know what Baptism signifies, and why God instituted precisely this external sign and form in the celebration of that sacrament, through which we are first taken into the community of the Christian Church. The work or act consists in our being sunk into the water, which passes over us, and in our being withdrawn from it again. These two parts, our sinking under the water, and coming out again, signify the efficacy and the work of Baptism, which are nothing else but the

edition, but omitted from the second, as above stated, on the authority of Baumgarten and Kollner. And even previously to that, it had been received into the Corpus doctrinæ Thuring, or Collection of Confessions, &c., and into that of Brandenburg and others. In Saxony exorcism was relinquished in 1591, but again restored a few years after, and retained until the last century, when it was made optional with the parents, and in some cases was actually practiced as late as 1836. In Hamburg the practice was retained till 1786, and in *Sweden* until 1811!! Siegel's Handbuch vol. II. p. 67."

[150] Page 24. The reader is referred to *Müller's Symbolische Bücher,* pp. 836, 837.

[151] Pages 23–24.

[152] Pages 33–35. *Ante,* p. 222.

[153] Page 34.

mortification of the old Adam, and afterwards, the resurrection of the new man; (Auferstehung) both of which are to be practiced by us through our whole life, so that a Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever to be continued.[154]

Again:

But no one is permitted to pour (begiessen) water on us again; for, if a person should permit himself to be immersed into water (ins wasser senken) a hundred times, it would still be no more than one baptism; this work, however, continues, and its signification is permanent.[155]

From the Smalcald Articles:

Baptism is nothing else than the word of God (Latin: cum mersione in aquam) in the water, commanded by his institution of it, or as St. Paul says: "A washing of water, by the word," Eph. 5:26.[156]

These "peculiar views of Luther on the mode of baptism" found in the above quotations,[157] the author(s) of the document point out, "were never adopted by his coadjutors, nor never insisted on by himself. They were not introduced even in the church at Wittemberg, much less in any other part of the Lutheran Church."[158] The passages here quoted represent views which were not given any importance "by our most enlightened divines, including Luther, Melanch-

[154] Pages 34–35.

[155] Page 35. A foot-note has this remark: "See the German of Müller, p. 495. 'Unter das Wasser senken, und wieder herauskommen.' —The Latin is stronger still."

[156] Page 35 (Smalcald Articles, Part 2d) (Symb. B., p. 384).

[157] The Smalcald Articles were written by Dr. Martin Luther in 1537, prefaced and subscribed by him. See pp. 302–336 of *The Book of Concord; or, The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs, Philadelphia, 1911.

[158] Page 33.

thon, and Chemnitz''.[159] The view taken by the Lutheran Church and that by Luther, in spite of these passages, is that of ''the great majority of Christian denominations''; viz., ''in regarding the quantity of water employed in baptism, as well as the mode of exhibiting it, not essential to the validity of the ordinance.'' [160] Immersion, the mode suggested in the cited passages, has not been commanded in the New Testament Scriptures and hence is not necessary.[161] Nevertheless, baptism by immersion is regarded as valid as that by affusion or aspersion. It is not practised, however, by the Lutheran Church, not because it is considered invalid, but because it ''is thought less suitable to a refined sense of moral feeling than the other [sprinkling], especially in countries where public bathing is unusual, and familiarity with its accompanying scenes has not divested them of their indelicacy.'' [162]

[159] "The controversy on this subject [*i. e.*, mode of baptism] has always been regarded [by these divines] . . . . as one of comparatively inferior importance." Page 33.

[160] Page 34.

[161] ". . . *no circumstances can be necessary to the validity of a divine ordinance, excepting those which God has commanded in his word. And as God has not commanded immersion in his word; therefore, it is not necessary to the validity of the ordinance of baptism.*" Page 34. The author(s) present the following exegesis: "The Greek words for baptize and baptism, used in the New Testament, (Heb. 9:10, Mark 7:4, Luke 11:38,) (*βάπτιζω, βαπτισμος*), signify various applications of water practiced by the Jews in their different rites; which certainly included sprinkling, pouring, washing, bathing; but in no case, certainly, immersion. See Numbers, 19:18, &c. Any mode of applying the water, will therefore meet the New Testament import of baptism. . . ." Page 34.

[162] Page 34. "The question in dispute is not whether baptism by immersion is valid; this is admitted. . ." ". . . various reasons render affusion, or aspersion, more suitable in our age . . ."

The whole question discussed in this Topic has nothing to do with infant baptism,[163] as such. "But the question is whether immersion is enjoined in Scripture, and consequently is *one essential part* of baptism, so that without it no baptism is valid, though it contain every other requisite." [164] Immersion is strongly suggested in the Symbolical Books (even from the pen of Luther). We should therefore *now* frankly so recognize the errors in our historical symbols. The Augsburg Confession is silent on the question of the mode of baptism.[165]

Errors Concerning the Personal or Hypostatic Union of the Two Natures in Christ.[166] "The chief error on this subject [found in the Lutheran Symbolical Books] is the supposition that the human and divine natures of Christ, to a certain extent interchange attributes." [167] Article VIII of the Form of Concord "Of the Person of Christ" contains such passages as these, which "we reject":

> But here there is in the highest degree a communion which God really maintains with the man; and from this personal union and the exalted and ineffable communion which thence results, proceeds all that is said and believed concerning God as man, and concerning the man Christ as God. This union and communion

[163] "The controversy on this subject . . . has no connexion with the question of infant baptism, because churches which baptize by immersion may and often do practice infant baptism (the Greek church); and those who baptize by affusion or aspersion, may confine the ordinance to adults." Pages 33–34.

[164] Page 34.

[165] "The Augsburg Confession . . . whilst it distinctly enjoins the baptism of infants, specifies nothing as to the mode of applying the water." Page 34.

[166] Pages 35–37. *Cf. ante,* p. 223.

[167] Page 35.

of natures, the ancient teachers of the church explain by the similitude of red-hot iron, and also by the union of body and soul in man.

Hence we believe, teach, and confess, that *God is man, and man God;* which could not be if the divine and human natures had no communion at all with each other.

Hence we believe, teach, and confess, that the Virgin Mary did not conceive and bring forth simply a mere man, but *the true Son of God;* for which reason she is also rightly called, and *she is truly the mother of God !!!*

He consequently now, not only as God, but also *as man, knows all things,* is able to *do all things,* is present to all creatures, and has under his feet and in his hands, (John 13:3,) all that is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth.[168]

On account of this personal union, and the communication following from it, which the divine and human natures in the person of Christ have with each other, in deed and in truth, such things are attributed to Christ according to the flesh, which his flesh according to its nature and essence cannot be in itself, and which it cannot have apart from this union: *namely, that his flesh is a true, vivifying food, and that his blood is a true, vivifying drink.*[169]

The Platform in this discussion evidently is referring to the Lutheran doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum,* although it does not specifically mention that theological term. The theory is rejected for the following stated reasons: (1) it is contrary to the view of Christ presented in the Holy Scriptures;[170] (2) it leads to confusion of accepted distinctions;[171] it is, by

[168] Pages 36–7 (reference is given to "Symb. B., pp. 576, 577"). *Cf.* pp. 517–518 in H. E. Jacobs' edition of "The Book of Concord", Phila., 1911.

[169] Page 37 (Symb. B., p. 700). *Cf.* Jacobs, *op. cit.* p. 639.

[170] "This, in common with all other Protestant Churches, we regard as contrary to the Holy Volume, which speaks of the union of two natures in one person in the Savior, precisely as it does of the union of soul and body into one person in man, without any one supposing them to teach an exchange of properties in the latter case." Page 35.

[171] "And yet (matter, or) the body and soul, are not more entirely

implication, dangerously close in giving sanction to the pagan practice of elevating humanity to a status of divinity.[172] Wherefore, such a theory as suggested in the Formula of Concord is to be definitely rejected.

The Supposed Special Sin-Forgiving Power of the Lord's Supper. This doctrine suggested in the other Symbolical Books (not in the Augsburg Confession) is also to be recognized as an error, and therefore definitely rejected.[173] Although the other Symbolical Books may not be said to teach this doctrine, yet expressions occur which are not guarded enough to prevent many to suppose that the sacrament effects *ex opere operato* the forgiveness of sins.[174] "The design of the Holy Supper"

and unchangeably distinct and different, than the Creator and creature, the human and the divine nature in Christ. To suppose this humanity could, in any case, acquire any of the distinctive attributes of the divinity, tends to destroy the immutable distinction between the Creator and the creature, the Infinite and the finite. . . . The idea, moreover, that the divinity was in any sense or degree conceived and brought forth by the frail mortal, the Virgin Mary, is preposterous in the view of common sense, as well as flatly contradictory to the declaration of Paul, Rom. 9:5, 'Whose are the Fathers, and of whom (through the Virgin Mary), *as concerning the* FLESH (not his divinity) *Christ came.*'" Pages 35–36.

[172] "The supposition that humanity in any case acquired some attributes of divinity, tends to give plausibility to the apotheosis of heroes and the pagan worship of inferior deities in general, as well as to the Romish worship of the Virgin Mary. Has not God himself taught us, 'I am the Lord thy God—*thou shalt have no other gods beside me.*'" Page 36.

[173] Pages 37–39. *Ante*, p. 223.

[174] "We reject the following passages, not because they clearly teach the above error, but because they are not sufficiently guarded, and are understood by many as inculcating the doctrine, that a sincere and devout participation of the Lord's Supper secures the pardon of sin, even where satisfactory evidences of regeneration are wanting, the persons referred to mistaking a mere historical belief for a living faith." Page 37.

is to show forth the Lord's death, to profess the name of the Redeemer before the world, to confirm the previous faith of the communicant, to bring him into closest communion with his blessed Savior, and to secure his special spiritual blessing: but not to bestow forgiveness for sins upon the unregenerate, however serious they may be.[175]

The communicant, then, must, before his participation in this solemn rite, have a living faith in Christ. Now, this faith, which "is found only in the regenerate mind",[176] alone is sufficient for pardon of sins and justification before God.[177] "Now, every communicant either possesses this faith, or he does not. If he does, he is justified or pardoned before he communes; if he is destitute of this faith, his communing cannot justify or pardon him; for man is justified by faith alone." [178] There are many church members who commune in the thought that by such an act they obtain forgiveness of sins—with no serious concern of their own unregenerated state.[179] This is the danger that is conveyed in such a doctrine, strongly suggested by certain passages in the Lutheran symbols. "The Scripture nowhere connects the forgiveness of sins

[175] Page 38.

[176] Page 37.

[177] "The word of God clearly inculcates the doctrine, to which Luther and his coadjutors gave such prominence, that no one can be justified or pardoned except by a living faith in Christ. . . . And whenever the sinner exercises this living faith in Christ he is justified, that is, his sins are pardoned." Page 37.

[178] Page 37.

[179] "Yet are there thousands of church members who afford no satisfactory evidence of regeneration, of that faith which works by love, and justifies the heart, and overcomes the world; who, because they approach the sacramental table with seriousness and sincerity, and perhaps with some sorrow for their sins, believe that they obtain pardon of their transgressions, and yet still continue in their unregenerate state." Page 37.

with the duty of sacramental communion, any more than with the performance of any other prominent Christian duty," and "it is not proper that we should do so."[180] "Hence we reject the following passages:"[181]

From the Apology to the Augsburg Confession:

For these are the seals and signs of the covenant and of grace in the New Testament, these are signs of reconciliation and forgiveness of sins. For *they offer forgiveness of sins,* as the words in the eucharist evidently proves: *This is my body, which was given for you. . . .*

This we say to them, that certainly the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is properly designed for the remission of guilt. For what consolation could we have, if forgiveness were offered there, and yet it were not the *remission of guilt.*[182]

From Luther's Smaller Catechism:

Of The Lord's Supper.

"*What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?*

"*Ans.* This is indicated by these words '*given and shed for you for the remission of sins;*' namely, that through these words in the Sacrament, *the remission of sins,* life, and salvation are imparted; for where there *is remission of sins,* there is also life and salvation."

From Luther's Larger Catechism, Part V:

Of The Lord's Supper.

"Thus we have briefly considered the first part that belongs to this sacrament. We shall now consider its virtue and utility, chiefly on account of which the Sacrament was instituted, and which are the most necessary qualities in it; that we may know what we should seek and obtain. Now, this is clear and easy to be understood, even from the words which we have mentioned: *This is my body and blood given and shed for you for the remission of sins.* The import of these words is briefly this:—We approach

[180] Pages 37–38.

[181] The following passages cited from Pages 38–39.

[182] Art. XII.

the Sacrament in order to receive a treasure, through and in which we *obtain the remission of sins.*

The author(s) of the Definite Synodical Platform suggest, "for the sake of uniformity, that any Synod adopting this Platform, should receive it entire, without alteration."[183] It is suggested also that each District Synod adopt the following three Resolutions:

I. *Therefore, Resolved,* That this Synod hereby avows its belief in the following doctrinal Platform, including the so called *Apostles' Creed,* the *Nicene Creed,* and *the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession,* as a more definite expression of the doctrinal pledge prescribed by the General Synod's Constitution for District Synods,[184] and as a correct exhibition of the Scripture doctrines discussed in it: and that we regard agreement among brethren on these subjects as a sufficient basis for harmonious coöperation in the same church.

II. *Resolved,* That we receive the General Synod's Formula of Government and Discipline, contained in her Hymn Book,[185] as our directory; and that any additions or alterations we may desire, we will embody in by-laws; so that our beloved Church may possess and exhibit to the world entire harmony in the reception of one Doctrinal and Disciplinarian Platform.

III. *Resolved,* That we will not receive into our Synod any minister who will not adopt this Platform, and faithfully labor to maintain its discipline in his charge.[186]

Evidently fearing that there may arise some dissension on the part of members of the District Synods on some of the reputed errors, the Platform reduces its standard of fellowship to these minimum terms:

At the same time, whilst we will not admit into our Synod any one who believes in *Exorcism, Private Confession and Absolution,* or the *Ceremonies of the Mass,* we grant liberty in regard to the

[183] Page 2.
[184] *Ante,* pp. 81–84.
[185] *Cf., ante,* p. 191.
[186] Pages 5–6.

other omitted topics,[187] and are willing, as heretofore, to admit ministers who receive them, provided they regard them as non-essential, and are willing to coöperate in peace and harmony with those who reject them, and to subscribe this Platform.[188]

Confusion having arisen in regard to what exactly was required as a pledge to fellowship by the Definite Synodical Platform, a second edition appeared in 1856 for the purpose of defining more exactly such a basis.[189]

The second edition makes clear that the second part of the Platform containing the nine topics discussed in detail "is not a part of the Pledge or Doctrinal Basis, to be individually subscribed",[190] but is "published by Synod, as a Disclaimer of the Symbolical errors often imputed to her",[191] and with the view "to discourage the views there rejected, and to repel the charge of avowing them."[192]

[187] "The other omitted topics"; (1) Those found in the Augsburg Confession of 1530: "Denial of the Divine Obligation of the Christian Sabbath"; "Baptismal Regeneration"; "The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Savior in the Eucharist", page 5. (2) Those found in the other symbolical books of the Lutheran Church: "The Outward Form of Baptism"; page 33 ff.; "Errors Concerning the Personal or Hypostatic Union of the Two Natures in Christ", page 35 ff.; "The Supposed Special Sin-Forgiving Power of the Lord's Supper", page 37 ff. These last topics "are here introduced as among the reasons for our rejection of all the other books except the Augsburg Confession." Page 5.

[188] Page 5.

[189] "N. B.—Some obscurity having resulted, in the first edition, from the selection of the term Platform, as the name of the whole pamphlet, after it had been employed in the work to designate a particular part of it, the nomenclature has been changed in the Preface and captions of the several parts, but not a single word altered in the discussions of the work itself." Page 2. *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod.* Second Edition—Phila. 1856.

[190] Page 2, second edition.

[191] *Ibid.*

[192] Note on page 6, second edition.

The Definite Synodical Platform, then, to which the several District Synods should now subscribe, is strictly speaking,

1. The Pledge to the Old and New Testament as the only Infallible Rule of Faith and Practice.
2. The Apostles' Creed.
3. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.
4. The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession.[193]

No one is to be admitted to fellowship, according to the Definite Synodical Platform, who holds to such doctrines as *"Exorcism"*, *"Private Confession and Absolution"*, and the *"Ceremonies of the Mass"*, or who regards the other doctrines mentioned as *essential* to Lutheranism.[194]

[193] *Ante*, p. 191. The "American Recension" and an English translation of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 are printed in parallel columns for the reader's comparison in APPENDIX B, *q. v.*

[194] *Ante*, pp. 233–234.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE "DEFINITE SYNODICAL PLATFORM"

HARDLY had this anonymous document appeared, before one of the district synods which met in the latter part of the same month took definite action, opposing it in a strong resolution and sending the cry of warning to the other sister synods "against this dangerous proposition" and the agitation which seemed inevitable because of it. The Synod of East Pennsylvania meeting at Lebanon, September 21 to 26, was the first body to sound the alarm; and it did so in the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, an anonymous pamphlet, entitled "Definite Synodical Platform", has been very widely circulated in the church, and has been transmitted to the members of this Synod generally; and whereas, the inevitable tendency of this production is to agitate, distract, and divide the church, by the introduction of changes of the gravest character, in the confessional position, and ecclesiastical and fraternal relations of the various sections of the Lutheran church, towards each other; and

Whereas, this Synod most deeply deprecates such an agitation, and recoils with mingled alarm and abhorrence, from the intolerant and proscriptive principles here avowed, and proposed for introduction into the organic structure of our church, by the adoption of such a creed, and its arbitrary enforcement, upon pain of exclusion from church fellowship, of all who will not sanction the system thus proposed; therefore,

Resolved, That we hereby express our most unqualified dis-

approbation of this most dangerous attempt to change the doctrinal basis, and revolutionize the existing character of the Lutheran churches, now united in the General Synod, and that we hereby most solemnly warn our sister Synods against this dangerous proposition, express our most earnest hope that none of them will either engage in or countenance such an agitation, but will use increased diligence to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" with their brethren, in all parts of the Lutheran church, who hold to the great evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, that we may, if possible, be daily drawn more closely to each other in faith and love, and thus prepared to labor more efficiently in all those high and holy enterprises, for the edification of the church, and the conversion of the world, to which the providence of God and the plain teachings of the gospel direct us.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published in the Lutheran Observer and Evangelical Lutheran, and that a copy of them be sent to the several Synods in connection with the General Synod.[1]

The moving spirit at this convention was Rev. J. A. Brown, who, in his presidential address, cautioned his hearers by calling their attention to the "strange doctrines [which] are propagated and endorsed from high places".[2]

On the same day that the Synod of East Pennsylvania opened its convention, the usual weekly issue of the *Lutheran Observer* appeared. On the front page of this issue, the reader was greeted with the following striking title to an article of some length: "Something to Think About—The 'Definite Synodical Platform.'" Through this article, Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, as editor, launched his program of defense of the document, and the controversy over the Definite

[1] *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Evangel. Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, Convened in Zion's Church, Lebanon, Lebanon County, Pa. September 21st to 26th, 1855.* Gettysburg: 1855. Pp. 13–14.

[2] Presidential Address of Rev. J. A. Brown, *ibid.*

Synodical Platform was begun. The author of the defense hid himself behind the signature, "A true Lutheran"; but it was not difficult to guess whose voice was being heard, in the light of the preceding editorial program of that church weekly. The article deserves to be quoted here in full, since (1) it is the first public defense of the Definite Synodical Platform; (2) it is written by one who, associated with others "behind the scenes", is acquainted with the motives and aim of the publication of that document; (3) it presents a summary of the doctrinal character of the Lutheran Church in America at this period as viewed by one of the advocates of "American Lutheranism"; (4) it is the first plea to the churches for adoption; and (5) it is characteristic of a type of articles which were to make their appearance in this magazine, a type which courted controversy and animosity rather than more deliberate and unprejudiced discussion of the issue. The article, in its entirety, follows:

A Pamphlet bearing the above title, published by Burlock & Miller, Philadelphia, containing 42 pages, has been forwarded to me by mail. I paid the 25 cents demanded and at once set right to work to read it. I need not tell you, Mr. Editor, that it is the right thing for the age. It comes just at the right time, and will no doubt do good. As a winnowing fan, it will separate the wheat from the chaff. This is just what we want. We, as American Lutherans, have had no confession. We have, it is true, stood before the world as believing the Augsburg Confession; but we did not all believe it in the same sense. Some believed it one way, and some another. There have been and are now some three or four parties in the Lutheran Church in America.

These parties may be set down under the following heads, viz:

1. The true American Lutherans, headed by Gettysburg and the Lutheran Observer. This body is unquestionably the largest, most

learned, and most efficient. This is the party that sustains the benevolent institutions of the church—her colleges and seminaries. This may be called the revival portion of the Lutheran Church. Out of the one thousand Lutheran preachers in the United States, about 600 may be put down as belonging to this arm of the church. I need not tell you that this grand division is the hope of the church. Take away this powerful and active party, and there is little left. Now, this is the portion of the Lutheran church that feels itself morally bound to set forth some definite Confessional platform, so that it may sail under true colors. This portion will hail with joy and gladness the seasonable appearance of this platform. As we are a Confessional church, we want something more definite to stand upon than the Erastians of the 16th century had.

The second party is the old Lutheran German party, consisting of the Missouri Synod men, the Buffalo men, the Henkleites [sic], and a few odd American aspirants, who expected to ride into ecclesiastical power in the old obsolete Confessions of the 16th century. But the thing would not work. Many of these old Lutheran brethren are no doubt sincere and honest in their adherence to the old moth eaten, and long since abrogated and repudiated system of semi-popish error. But still they hold on to them; this party can of course make no progress. As they doomed themselves to go backwards, so they are doomed to go down. If they could return to Germany, and make their abode in East Friesland, they might live there as a church, as long as the government would tolerate them. But they cannot live here; it is too late, in the 19th century. This party will, of course, look at this platform as a destructive affair—as an anti-Lutheran document. There is one quotation from the Form of Concord, page 6, that will set hard on this party, viz: "But all human writings and symbols are not authorities like the Holy Scriptures, but they are only a testimony and an explanation of our faith, showing the manner in which at any time the Holy Scriptures were understood and explained by those who then lived." Now this is just my view of the case. Those who lived in the 16th century formed a platform to stand upon; they had a right, and it was their duty to do it. But they had no right, and never claimed the right to make a platform for us and for all time to come. The Roman Catholic church claims this right, but no other. The

whole ground on this subject is now brought before the church; let us examine it well. We *must* do it at some period in our history, and we may as well just get to work now. I, for one, am fully prepared for a regular siege. I would like to have the platform of the American Lutheran Church settled and fixed as far as it can be done. But let the thing be done in a temperate, christian spirit.

3. The third party consists of the moderate men of the Ohio and Joint Synods, and a number of the old Pennsylvania Synod men. These men cannot go with the Missourians nor their conferees of New York, still they want to be highly confessional and consistent, and no doubt are honest. But it seems to me there is no platform for them to stand upon, unless they take the old platform of the Henkleites [sic], or Missourians, or take the one now under review. Many of the brethren of these respectable Synods will no doubt gladly accept this platform, and stand side by side with their brethren of Gettysburg. (We use the word Gettysburg as the representation of the American Lutheran Church.)

Then we have Lutherans who have no confessionality about them at all. They take the Bible, pretty much as the Congregationalists, and every man goes in for his own interpretation. Now it seems to me we ought to give a little on all sides, and adopt a common Lutheran platform. Let us for the sake of our beloved and venerable church, which we all love, adopt some common standpoint, and we will be strengthened at home and respected abroad. Let the district Synods take up this matter, and see what can be done towards a general union. We are now, I think, prepared for such a work, but we must all be willing to give and take. When the district Synods come up to the next General Synod, each one with its platform, based upon the one just published, perhaps, we can then engross the whole, and adopt a confession for our whole church. This pamphlet seems to be the entering wedge into this knotty point. I should like to have it thoroughly examined in the Lutheran Observer. If it cannot stand the test of sound reason and the Holy Scriptures, let it be rejected. Let it be carefully read and compared with the old confessions of the church. It is evidently prepared by a master hand, and indicates a profound knowledge of our symbolical books. The man who prepared it deserves the thanks of the whole church. I would like some able pen to show cause why we ought not to adopt such a platform.

I am for its adoption, and at the proper time will give my reasons for it.

A True Lutheran.[3]

The same issue of the *Lutheran Observer,* however, carried an article of protest against the reception of the Platform. This, too, was anonymous. Of interest here are some of the biting phrases and caricatures of the document which reveal the bitterness and acrimony which was to characterize the whole controversy. The document is spoken of as "the vaguest, most inconsequent, and most milk-and-water mixture"; "the embodiment of the rankest partyism"; "a wedge of deep disruption and a burning brand"; a "fatherless revolutionary platform"; and a warning that "there is a cat in the meal tub";[4] that it is "making the noble and harmonious Augsburg Confession look like a lean and starved thing, tearing and gnawing itself in the agonies of desperation";[5] and finally it proposes the "most dangerous and far-reaching revolution in the whole doctrinal and historical foundation of our Lutheran Zion in America."[6]

The day after the close of the sessions of the East Pennsylvania Synod, the annual convention of the West Pennsylvania Synod, to which body Professor S. S. Schmucker belonged, was opened. Prominent clergymen present were S. S. Schmucker, C. Philip Krauth, A. H. Lochman, M. Jacobs, and P. Anstadt. This list of names at once suggests leaders in two opposing

[3] Front page, columns 5 and 6, *Lutheran Observer,* B. Kurtz, Editor. Baltimore, Friday, September 21, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 38, Whole No, 1150.
[4] Column 3, p. 157, *ibid.*
[5] Column 3, p. 157, *ibid.*
[6] Column 2, *ibid.*

camps. If the document be formally presented to such a group, it becomes inevitable that there would be vigorous debate. And such did actually occur. The communication from the East Pennsylvania Synod, warning its sister synods against the anonymous pamphlet, brought the matter officially before this body. For two days the debate was carried on in this district synod. It was evident to all who were acquainted with the general situation in the church at large that not only a document itself was at stake, but an issue between two opposing schools of Lutheranism. And what added the interest and significance to this convention were the principal figures who sought valiantly to win this district synod to their side. It is safe to say that the eyes of the ministry and lay leaders of the General Synod were watching with keen and anxious interest the sessions of this district synod. Rev. A. H. Lochman got the chairmanship of the committee which was to bring in a report and frame an expression of attitude on the document in question. The report of this committee, which precipitated the heated debate and which was finally "after an animated discussion" [7] adopted, was a most telling death-blow to the Definite Synodical Platform and a decisive repudiation of the leadership in the church of S. S. Schmucker who defended it.

. . . A communication from the East Pennsylvania Synod, addressed to this body through their Secretary, Rev. B. Sadtler, in reference to an anonymous pamphlet, entitled "Definite Synodical

[7] *Proceedings of the 31st Annual Session of the Evangelical Luth. Synod of West Pennsylvania, Held at Shippensburg, Cumberl'd., Pa., from the 27th of Sept. to the 1st of Oct., 1855*, p. 18. Gettysburg: 1855.

Platform". The committee is of opinion, that courtesy to the body from which it is sent, demands that it be read before this body. As this subject has not formally been brought before Synod, your committee does not feel authorized to recommend any specific action on this subject.

Your committee would, however, deprecate, and most solemnly protest against bringing in any new issues and tests of church fellowship, as inimical to the peace and harmony of the church, and as unnecessarily burdening the consciences of the brethren.[8]

In the light of this initial opposition on the part of these two district synods to the Definite Synodical Platform it was with a note of joy and optimism that the *Lutheran Observer* in its next weekly issue announced to its readers that one of the district synods had adopted the platform by a unanimous vote and thereby had proved the need of that document. The announcement reads as follows:

Definite Synodical Platform Adopted by the Wittenberg Synod. —From Evangelical Lutheran, which has just reached us, we learn the interesting fact, that the Definite Platform, which originated in the wants of the West, has been deliberately discussed at the recent meeting of the Wittenberg Synod, and adopted *by a unanimous vote.* This fact clearly proves the deep conviction of the necessity of such a platform, and certainly, if needed in the opinion of those brethren, no one can dispute their right to adopt it.[9]

The moving spirit in this district synod in Ohio was Dr. Samuel Sprecher,[10] who had been president of the

[8] *Proceedings of the 31st Annual Session of the Evangelical Luth. Synod of West Pennsylvania*, etc., p. 19.

[9] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, September 28, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 39, Whole No. 1151. The minutes of this synod for 1855 were not accessible, although a search was made in the libraries of the Lutheran Historical Association and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, both at Gettysburg, Pa., as well as in the library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Mount Airy, Philadelphia.

[10] *Ante*, pp. 187–188.

synod three years before.[11] This news from "the West" of the favorable action, earlier in the month, of this district synod was greeted with enthusiasm by the leaders of "American Lutheranism" in the East. It was felt that the two synods that had gone on record in opposition to the Platform would awaken and see their error.

"A True Lutheran" came again before the readers of the *Lutheran Observer* with an article in defense of "The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession."[12] He proposed to show that the Lutheran divines of 1855 have as much learning and piety as "those old sturdy and warlike theologians"[13] back in 1580, and therefore are as well, if not better prepared, to form a confession as they. Moreover, "we have the same promise of the Savior's presence that they had . . . We are altogether as competent now to do the work as they were". The only difference between those earlier Lutheran theologians and the American is

that, when they made a platform the civil powers would force it down the throats of the people, and we must reason the people into our views.

Moreover,

if the church in 1855 is not as learned as in 1580, then we have for the last 275 years been dull disciples, indeed.

[11] *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Wittenberg Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ohio; Held in Plymouth, Richland County, Ohio, from the 2nd to the 7th of September 1852.* Mansfield, O., 1852. Pp. 20–21. The synod at this session consisted of thirty ministers and twelve lay delegates.

[12] Columns 2 and 3, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, September 28, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 39, Whole No. 1151.

[13] Column 2, *ibid.*

The same writer throws out the challenge "that not one Lutheran minister in ten" believes all the views set forth in the historic symbols of the church:

> I know some profess to believe everything in them, but I would like to see the Lutheran minister in any intelligent English Lutheran congregation, get up before the people and tell them that he believes, and that they as Lutherans are morally bound to believe everything which the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession rejects.

For instance he adds:

> Would any intelligent English Lutheran congregation hear the doctrine on the Lord's Supper, as taught in the unaltered Augsburg Confession, or in the Apology, or the Form of Concord, viz: "The pure doctrine of our church is, that the words, *'take, eat, this is my body: drink, this is my blood,'* are to be understood simply and according to the letter." And that the body (which is eaten) is the natural body of Christ which hung upon the tree, and that the blood is the natural blood which flowed from the side of Christ. Do any of our ministers proclaim this almost worse than Popish view from the pulpit?
>
> Nor is there an intelligent English Lutheran preacher, within my knowledge, who would proclaim the teachings of the Lutheran symbols on the subject of auricular confession, or baptismal regeneration, or the hypostatic union of Christ, where, in direct contradiction of the Bible, the Virgin Mary is made the mother of God. It is not true, as the Lutheran symbols say, "that Christ as man knew everything," for in Mark xiii: 32, it is absolutely denied by the Saviour himself.[14]

The confessions of the church were drawn up to meet the exigencies of the times. None of them are final statements. Each succeeding age will have to alter and amend them as a better understanding of the Bible grows. The special service of any confessional state-

[14] Column 2, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, September 28, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 39. Whole No. 1151.

ment is to the age and circumstance in which it appears. The present day demands an honest statement of confession by American Lutherans, and such is presented in this Definite Synodical Platform. Even this confessional statement may need to be thrust aside by our posterity.

> So the Recension that we may now adopt may in future ages be thrust aside. Our fathers bore the same relations to us as we do to our posterity.[15]

At any rate, the situation in America among Lutherans demands a definite credal statement.

> It is high time that the American Lutheran Church should assume her true position among her sister churches, and not stand before the world as she has done, outwardly professing a creed she does not and cannot believe.

If this honest and fearless doctrinal statement, which the Definite Synodical Platform presents, causes a schism in the church,

> I for one am fully prepared for the worst . . . let the division take place, in fact . . . it now virtually does exist. The breach cannot be much enlarged. The symbolical men have made a breach, and we cannot close it without the sacrifice of everything we hold dear, as free and independent American Lutherans.[16]

The same issue of this Lutheran weekly carried an article signed by the pseudonym "Hartwick" in which the same document is again denounced in no uncertain terms. It is described as "a foundling, wrapped in

[15] Columns 2 and 3, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, September 28, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 39. Whole No. 1151.

[16] Column 3, *ibid.*

mystery, without any clue to its parentage";[17] the result of "a secret consultation" with the purpose of "dissecting and mutilating the Augsburg Confession". "Such a garbled, incoherent statement of doctrinal tenets as is furnished in this platform" is "a burlesque on the General Synod". The writer flatly denies that the Augsburg Confession contains the errors attributed to it. Those "who have had a hand in concocting it must have regarded their work with no little complacency" since they desire that the synods "receive it entire, without alteration". "It is a flimsy affair" "intended for effect" and will "defeat itself by its own weakness and absurdity".

The next district synod to express itself on the Definite Synodical Platform was the Synod of Virginia, and it did so in the following manner:

Whereas a certain *anonymous* Document under the title of a *"Definite Synodical Platform,"* has made its appearance in the Churches, and has been generally distributed among our clergy—and whereas we are not certain, whether a friend or an enemy hath done this—and whereas in the estimation of this Synod the thing itself is uncalled for and calculated to create divisions and contentions, and moreover is an unwarrantable interference with the established doctrinal basis of our Church, and is an attempt at arrogant and impudent dictation on the part of its unknown author or authors.

Therefore,

I. *Resolved,* That we as a Synod, hereby set our seal of condemnation on this as well as on all other efforts of dictation of a similar character, and warn all our Sister Synods against the adoption of this strange document.

II. *Resolved,* That we regret exceedingly the action of our Brethren of the Wittemberg [sic] Synod, in adopting this strange document, and solicit them most affectionately to reconsider said action.

[17] Column 1, p. 2., *ibid.*

III. *Resolved,* That this preamble and resolutions be sent by the Secretary to the papers of the Church for publication.[18]

Two of the district synods belonging to the General Synod, meeting the same month, failed to express themselves one way or another upon the document.[19] Formal expressions were reserved for later conventions. The Olive Branch Synod in Indiana, which carried the motto "In Fundamentals, Unity—in Non-Essentials, Liberty—in all things, Charity",[20] came forth with a hearty and unanimous approval of the document after "an interesting discussion, in which the members of Synod generally participated, and after considering the subject in all its bearings and consequences".[21] It is of significance that Dr. Samuel Sprecher was present at this convention and received "as an advisory member of Synod".[22] It is fair to infer that he was very much interested in the deliberations of this synod "to the West" for this year. A committee of three appointed to examine carefully the document in question reported as follows:

[18] *Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Convention, of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Virginia. Held at Zion's Church, Augusta County, Virginia, October 4–9, 1855.* Mountain Valley, Va., 1855. P. 15.

[19] *Cf. Minutes of the Fifth Session of the Evangelican* [sic] *Lutheran Synod, of Northern Illinois, Held at Waverly Station, Lasalle Co., Illinois. Oct. 4–8, 1855.* Freeport, Ill. 1855. Also *cf. Proceedings of the 14th Annual Convention of the Alleghany Evangel. Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened in Schellsburg, Bedford County, Pa., October the 11th to the 15th, 1855.* Gettysburg: 1855.

[20] Printed conspicuously on the cover of their printed minutes.

[21] *Minutes of the Eighth Convention of the Olive Branch Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, of the State of Indiana, Convened at Columbus, Bartholomew County, Ind., Oct. 11–17, 1855.—"In Fundamentals, Unity—in Non-Essentials, Liberty—in all things, Charity."* Indianapolis: 1855. P. 9.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

Your Committee, having examined documents placed in their hands, called "Definite Synodical Platform", do most heartily concur in its design and sentiments, and recommend it to Synod for adoption, which we hope will be done unanimously.[23]

To which report the Synod gave its official approval in the following way:

Whereas, we regard it as our right, and in the relation which we sustain to the Church, and the world, our duty, to make an explicit declaration of our faith in regard to important points of doctrines, in reference to which there is much difference of opinion among Lutherans; and whereas, the General Synod has no definite Synodical Platform, but allows each district Synod to act for itself on this subject; and inasmuch as the definite Synodical Platform gives a correct statement of the errors which we have practically rejected, and a just exhibition of the doctrines which we have always, as a Synod, believed and taught, and is consequently no new creed, but is well adapted to the desirable purpose of definitely defining our doctrinal position; therefore,

Resolved, That we do most heartily adopt it as an explicit declaration of what we, as a Synod, believe and practice.[24]

Any one acquainted with the literary style of S. S. Schmucker might safely infer that it is to his pen that the source of an article which appeared in the *Lutheran Observer* for October 12 is to be laid. The heading of the article read, "Remarks on the Definite Synodical Platform, by One Who aided in its Construction".[25] A cool, deliberate discussion of the merits of the document, together with an explanation of its origin and its general setting in the existing circumstances of the church, are presented. The writer, after expressing his joy over the action of the Wittenberg Synod, tells

[23] *Minutes of the Eighth Convention of the Olive Branch Synod,* etc., p. 9.

[24] *Ibid.,* pp. 9–10.

[25] Columns 4 and 5, front page, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, October 12, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 41, Whole No. 1153.

his readers of the immediate background and provocation to the publication of this pamphlet. At the last meeting of the General Synod,[26] in conversations he had had with many of the men who labored among the Western churches, the writer was impressed by the peculiar circumstances and disadvantages in which these men found themselves. "Their old school neighbors" had been busy circulating "the former symbolical books" among the people and were insisting that these older confessions contained the doctrines acceptable to true Lutherans. Dissenting, as many of these "western brethren" did, from some of the doctrinal statements found in these historic symbols, a situation was created which demanded a more specific expression of this dissent, in order to enlighten the people of the differences at stake and to combat such adverse propaganda. The Definite Synodical Platform has come to their aid. Heretofore the "Old Lutherans" have had an advantage in being able to point to a definite body of doctrinal statements. This their advantage has now been overcome by a counter definite platform. It is only fair that *both* groups express themselves in a clear and open way. American Lutherans have now a document which is "extremely suitable" to meet any similar situation. It is to be admitted that many of the brethren of the East have not yet felt the challenge as those in the West; let such keep their old pledge, if they will, until a change becomes necessary. The annoyance of "European brethren", however, has, within the last fifteen years,

[26] This was held in Dayton, Ohio, June 14–21, 1855; *i. e.*, about three months before the appearance of the "Definite Synodical Platform".

been aggravating, and who can tell when and where it may be as pressing an issue as it has been among those who have come into contact with "old school synods"?

Feeling that there was a point to the criticism that was being made that the Platform attempted to shut out those who disagreed on some of the doctrines peculiar to historic Lutheranism, the same writer tries to make clear that the

Platform is as liberal as the General Synod itself. It cordially offers to receive all believers in the real presence and baptismal regeneration, if they do not regard those doctrines as essential, and are willing to coöperate in peace. Accordingly it does not require them or any one else to subscribe the *second* part of the document, in which those doctrines are represented as errors, which an old-school Lutheran could not consistently do. But it expressly declares the *doctrinal* basis, to which all must assent, to consist of the Apostles' Creed, the *Nicene Creed,* and the *revised edition of the Augsburg Confession.* See p. 5, 6.[27]

The Platform "adds no new doctrines of any kind whatever". Therefore,

every sentence of this doctrinal platform is believed by all old Lutherans, and may be subscribed by them, if they are willing to coöperate with those who reject the omitted clauses. As to their thus sanctioning the rejection of several views regarded by them as true, that will not follow, as the platform expressly apprises the public that a small number of its adherents believe those opinions. On the same principle we have for years been circulating the *entire* Augsburg Confession, including the points we reject, merely apprising the public that our assent to it is qualified.

The writer denies the charge that the Platform represents a breach from generic Lutheranism. On the contrary,

[27] Column 4, *Lutheran Observer,* October 12, 1855. Vol. 23., etc.

It retains our historical and statutory identity with the Lutheran Church all over the world, and is a plan to which all can agree without professing any doctrine which they regard as error. It is merely a statutory delineation of the liberal state of doctrine and ecclesiastical communion which has heretofore existed among us as the common law of the church.[28]

The reader is reminded of the fact that

for half a century past, men on entering the Lutheran ministry in this country were pledged to the Bible alone, and not a word was said about any other confession of faith, although there was a traditionary understanding that the Augsburg Confession exhibited their views on the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, until the General Synod recommended the express requisition of this fundamental assent in her Constitution for District Synods.[29]

The spirit of the document is in accord with the spirit which has characterized the Lutheran Church in this country. There is no need to raise any alarm or to cause excitement. Specifically, it is meeting a definite situation which has brought it into being.

The articles opposing the Platform which appeared in the weekly issues of the *Lutheran Observer* in the beginning of the controversy are rhetorical rather than argumentative. One cannot withhold the suspicion that a process of selection was going on under the supervision of the editor. There was no dearth of articles sent in as protests against the anonymous document. It is safe to infer that the editor would have to plead guilty of this charge of selection, if it were brought before his conscience. The reader is at once struck by the shallowness and superficiality of the type of articles, presented in these issues, on the other side.

[28] Column 5, *Lutheran Observer*, October 12, 1855. Vol. 23., etc.
[29] Column 4, *ibid.*

Indeed, "A True Lutheran" charges one of the opponents of the document whose voice had been heard in the columns of this paper, as follows:

> This squib firer . . . presents no argument against the Platform, and none in favor of the old symbols.[30]

That same opponent is characterized as having a mind which "must be deficient in perspicacity".[31] Since he is in favor of "setting up a musty document", *i. e.*, the collective body of historic symbols, and accepting "the doctrine of the Lord's presence, as taught in the Augsburg Confession", which doctrine is plainly "a popish error", let him seek company "with the Missouri men".

The *Evangelical Review*, a Lutheran theological quarterly,[32] gave the document a mere passing notice in its book review column in the October issue. The reviewer declares that the Definite Synodical Platform

> is an attempt to bring into practice and give reality to the principles set forth in Dr. Schmucker's "Manual".[33] *There* it is declared that the Lutheran Church has rejected certain parts of the Augsburg Confession and other Symbolical Books, and *here* is a form in which it is proposed to do this! . . . It is a proposition . . . to adopt Dr. Schmucker's emasculated Augsburg Confession.[34]

The same reviewer speaks of the historic confessions as standing "upon an immovable rock of truth" and of "the reviving church in Germany, which begins once

[30] Column 5, *Lutheran Observer*, October 12, 1855. Vol. 23., etc.
[31] Column 5, *ibid.*
[32] *Ante*, p. 143.
[33] *Ante*, p. 183.
[34] *Evangelical Review*, Edited by C. P. Krauth, D.D., and by Wm. M. Reynolds, D.D., October, 1855, No. XXVI, Vol. VII, pp. 293–294. Gettysburg, 1855–56.

more to gather around and endeavor to take its stand upon this rock". The document is a serious menace to this glorious revival of Lutheranism. No Lutheran Synod "will be beguiled into the awful movement here so abruptly, yet so confidently proposed to them". The review closes with the prayer: *"Dafüer Gott behüete uns!"*

The Synod of Maryland opened its annual sessions on October 18. Prominent clergymen present were B. Kurtz, J. G. Morris, H. L. Baugher, J. A. Seiss, with Dr. S. S. Schmucker present as a visiting delegate from the West Pennsylvania Synod. A committee was appointed to report on the communication from the East Pennsylvania Synod.[35] Although Dr. Kurtz was made a member of this committee, the majority of the committeemen belonged to that group which was not in sympathy with the document in question. The following report submitted to the synod, signed by all the members of the committee, strongly suggests a compromise:

> The paper submitted to your committee, is a letter from the East Pennsylvania Synod, detailing certain action had upon a document entitled a "Definite Synodical Platform". Your committee would suggest that as said platform is not officially before us, no action is required.[36]

The report was not adopted. Although the minutes of this convention do not show specifically that the synod recommitted the report to the committee, such

[35] *Ante*, pp. 236–237.

[36] *Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Evangelical Luth. Synod of Maryland, Convened in St. Paul's Church, Washington City, D. C., October the 18th to the 23d, 1855.* P. 11. Gettysburg, 1855.

an inference may be drawn from the fact that the very same committee two days later presented another report of a different character:

Resolved, That we protest against any attempt by Synod or individuals, of old or new school sentiments, to introduce among us any new confessions of faith, or tests of Synodical membership, but hereby renew our declaration of adherence to that contained in our ordination service, which embraces the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, as correctly taught in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession.[37]

The minutes are strangely silent on the question of adoption of this second report.[38]

By this time the columns of the *Lutheran Observer* had waxed hot in the burning controversy. Anonymous articles came crowding the editor's desk. Voices clamored to be heard. Only a little more than a month had passed since the little brochure of forty-two pages had appeared. The editor by this time had to ask his contributors to be patient, and refrain from personalities.

Articles respecting the "Definite Platform" are multiplying; we shall endeavor to confine our sheet to two each week, viz., one on each side of the question. Ungentlemanly personalities will not be allowed.[39]

Heat rather than light continued to be engendered. It was "hyper-symbolists" over against "reckless and shallow-brained innovators". One writer asks:

[37] *Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Evangelical Luth. Synod of Maryland,* etc., p. 18.

[38] This becomes significant through the fact that other committee reports are expressly declared "adopted".

[39] Column 2, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, October 26, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 43, Whole No., 1155.

How does a christian "walk in the apostles' doctrines."

Is it by carrying with him a copy of some "confession or symbol," and at every opportunity trying to convince his fellow-men that his church alone holds the apostles' doctrines in purity? [40]

And then concludes:

But can't we, instead of conjuring up a Platform, just agree to reject the whole entire mass of old, dusty, moth-eaten symbolism, and set our feet once more upon the rock of ages, against which alone the "gates of hell shall not prevail," when your mint and cummintithers shall be branded as "blind leaders of the blind." But you may say there is no end to the differences of opinion if you leave every one to interpret scripture for himself; and if you make symbols and confessions till doom's-day you can't satisfy those same carpers.[41]

Speakers in district synods and writers in the church papers mustered together their powers in oratory and rhetoric. The art of allegorizing was skilfully employed, injecting a complex of humor and sarcasm into the otherwise "tense situation". Three such examples are classic and typical of the whole controversy.

An opponent of the Definite Synodical Platform is reported to have described the irregular procedure of the author(s) of the document, on the floor of the recent convention of the West Pennsylvania Synod, in the following manner:

He represented the Lutheran church by a great and splendid city. In the midst of this city on a large public square stands a magnificently beautiful tree, whose branches extended through its main streets, north, south, east and west. Certain individuals from different sections of this city chance to meet together, and in course of conversation begin to talk about the beauty of their tree, praise

[40] Column 7, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, November 2, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 44, Whole No. 1156.

[41] Column 1, p. 2, *ibid.*

it as the ornament and glory of their city; but at the same time greatly lament that certain branches, in their opinion, very ill-shaped, are suffered to remain upon it. They know the strong veneration the city has for this tree, and how greatly they would deprecate the laying of the axe to any part of it. So they agree to meet together some dark night for the purpose of trimming it to square with their notions of beauty. This agreement is held confidential.

At the appointed time they meet, and begin to whack away, cutting off such as they think should be off. In the morning the city unsuspectingly rouses from its slumbers. The tree, the tree, is almost the first expression you hear. Who hath done this? An enemy hath done it. Who dared to mutilate it? This tree belongs to the whole city. The proper authorities should have undertaken the pruning, if any pruning is to be done, and not a few in secret council.[42]

"A Western Man" in an article pictures the action of the East Pennsylvania Synod, in sending forth its "bull" of warning to other sister-synods, in the following manner:

In reading their preamble and resolutions in respect to the Platform, I was reminded of a school-boy who had a spite at his teacher because he required him to do his duty. He told a parcel of other boys that his teacher was a cruel tyrant, and then chalked a frightful looking picture on a barn-door, saying that was a life-like portrait of the hard-hearted school-master, and called on all his play-fellows to pelt the ugly chalk sketch with mud, and they accordingly did pelt it broad-cast with mud. So the young brother in the Synod misunderstood the Platform; fabricated a hideous picture of it, hung it up before the Synod, called on his brethren to condemn it, and they accordingly did condemn it with a will "unanimously." I guess he has a lively imagination and could write poetry; any how it is plain that he can do *fancy* writing. If the Platform was what he represents it to be, the whole church would have sense enough to condemn it of their own accord, without being warned by him. . . .[43]

[42] Column 4, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, October 19, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 42, Whole No. 1154.

[43] Column 1, p. 2., *ibid.*

The most classic picture illustration, however, of the entire controversy, one which received wide comment and became long remembered, is that which appeared in the same weekly in the issue of November 16. It deserves to be quoted:

The Definite Synodical Platform. . . . Illustration.

It happened on a warm and dusty day that a number of men residing in the East, were traveling in company toward the West. They were all neighbors and friends, of one way of thinking on every important subject, and aiming at one and the same great and noble purpose. After they had journeyed together for many days in harmony, they descried in the dim distance an object of which they could at first barely discern a faint outline. They immediately commenced a vehement dispute as to what the object was.

One man said it was a lion, and pulling a pistol from its case, warned his fellow-travelers to join him in preparation for self-defence; another thought it was a hyena, and drew at the same time a dirk from his pocket to repel the animal; a third maintained that it was a wolf and seized a hatchet that had been slung over his shoulders, in order to be ready for the recontre. Others who had no weapons, supplied themselves with heavy clubs and wielded them in the air by way of exercise, in order to use them more effectively when they came in contact with the monster.

Several of the travelers bade their comrades wait until the object approached nearer and the dust has somewhat subsided, and then they could see more clearly, and would perhaps discover that it was a harmless creature by no means requiring such war-like precautions. Two or three of the men were rather amused at the violent disputes and unnecessary alarms, and insisted that the animal approaching was nothing but an innocent lamb, somewhat disfigured by the dust blown upon it and the mud and briars that had accumulated about its legs and head.

At length the parties neared each other, and lo, the sight which had produced so much wrangling and consternation, proved to be a very pretty white dog, small, harmless and sportive.

The frightened travelers were ashamed of themselves, and put

away their weapons in silence. They however took possession of the dog, and coming to a fountain washed him thoroughly, combed out his long snow-white hair, patted his head, called him by the name of "foundling", and won his confidence.

He soon became a favorite, and every one was anxious to possess him; but as a [sic] they could not agree who among them should become his owner, they determined to present him to the queen as a perfectly formed and most beautiful lap-dog. The queen was pleased with the rare present; her children were delighted, and on account of his bright sparkling eyes, proposed calling him *diamond* instead of "foundling"; but because of his remarkably white and glossy coat of hair, the queen decided that his name should be *pearl,* and he quickly learned to respond to that application. All the servants aspired to the privilege of feeding and nursing the pet . . . and for years he was the favorite of the royal household, and enjoyed free ingress and egress in the palace.[44]

The same writer adds a lengthy "Application", in which he draws the proper "lessons" from his text. Consolation is given to the friends of the Definite Synodical Platform in its present experience of unpopularity by referring to the fate which comes to all reforms. Look only to the opposition which greeted a Christ, a Luther, the Wesleys, and a Whitefield, as well as the inauguration of the Sunday-school! Look only to the prejudices and obstacles that lay before those who attempted to organize the General Synod and a Theological Seminary. "The Definite Platform is thus far a child of favor compared with it." [45]

An anonymous sermon using the Scriptural injunction, "Beware of the Dogs", appeared in answer to the above illustrated article in the *Lutheran Stand-*

[44] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, November 16, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 46, Whole No. 1158.

[45] Column 7, *ibid.*

ard.[46] Both articles aroused wide comment and no little amusement.

The illustration of the tree continued to be fruitful of further application. The secretary of the Olive Branch Synod sent in the following notice to the readers of the *Lutheran Observer:*

> The "Olive Branch Synod", Mr. Editor, believes that this beautiful tree, of which our West Pennsylvania brethren have been speaking so admirably, needs pruning to save it from death, and in their opinion it has been very skilfully done, evidently by an experienced trimmer, and they entertain no fears as to the quality of the fruit which this pruned tree will bear.
>
> Give the old tree, in its pruned condition, a fair trial for the next ten years, and if the trunk is not wonderfully enlarged by a solid and not a fictitious growth, and the branches spreading out far and wide, laden with the precious fruit which the preaching of a pure gospel produces, then, as a member of that Synod, I would be ready to rescind and try something better.[47]

Sparks continued to fly. One writer warns his readers to take unto themselves more seriously the whole question involved in the document. The tract is now before each reader, and it demands the serious attention of every one. Who knows, but perhaps even a little tract, which an individual in this life scorned,

> will rise against him in the day of judgment. . . . I verily believe that it will rise against us in the day of judgment.[48]

Even though it comes before the public

[46] See *ante*, p. 143. Dr. H. E. Jacobs in an interview at Philadelphia, February 27, 1925, informed the present writer that the manuscript of this sermon, in the archives at the Mount Airy Lutheran Theological Seminary, is that from the preserved collection of Dr. J. A. Seiss.

[47] Column 6, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, November 23, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 47, Whole No. 1159.

[48] Column 7, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 7, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 41, Whole No. 1169.

without father or without mother, it is none the worse for that; for if this be true, it is only more like to Melchisedic, and surely he was a priest of the most high God . . .[49]

The same writer goes on to say:

We are told that it is calculated to distract and divide the church. To such I would simply say in the language of Luther . . . "May we therefore be rid of those preachers, who say to the church of Christ 'peace, peace, when there is no peace'. We must exhort Christians to endeavor to follow Christ their Head under the cross, through death and hell; for it is better through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of heaven, than to gain a carnal security by the consolations of a false peace." . . . Those who ask us to receive entire the Augsburg Confession, or at least tacitly to submit to the attempts to give it the authority of a universal creed of the Lutheran church, ask a little too much.

In my estimation these symbolists are aptly set forth by the prophet when he says of the Jews: "They hatch cockatrice's eggs, he that eateth their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper."

This was literally exemplified at a meeting of our last Synod. The definite platform was brought up; one of these symbolists got up, and the way he did snap and hiss at the platform was both amusing and pitiful; *amusing* to see the "critter" writhe because the shell forming its dark, narrow prison was about to be broken, and its real nature and existence to be exposed to the light of the sun,—*pitiful,* because of the mental agony which, as a general thing, lies at the fountain-head of a boisterous flow of vituperation.[50]

"J. A. B." expressed himself in the columns of the same paper, saying that the whole controversy was making the hearts of many of the brethren "sick", and added the conviction that the author(s) of the document

will be ashamed of it when they get to heaven.[51]

[49] Column 7, front page *Lutheran Observer,* Friday, December 7, 1855., etc.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] Column 5, front page, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday,

Another writer [52] characterizes his opponent's article in the following "complimentary" way:

> As for "Matthias", his whole article would present more truth if read *backward* from the beginning to end; for it is the most silly rigmarole of verdancy that we have met with a long time.[53]

The same writer quotes another who had described the Platform as

> made of many planks brought from afar and outwardly joined, but having no life union.

The opponents, having expressed their sympathy to the author(s) of the document in their bitter experience of reversal, gave this same writer cause to "thank" them:

> Noble, generous, consistent, loving and lovely souls are ye! a thousand thanks for your spontaneous kindness and overflowing sympathy!

"An Old Lutheran" begged the editor to call a halt to this whole ecclesiastical quarrel, which only is bringing to light those "sinful lusts that war against the spirit".[54] And think only, he adds, of the enormous cost of fighting! All wars are costly. Look only to the tremendous cost of the Crimean War. After laying before his readers the financial debts brought about through that war (quoting an extract from a Paris

January 4, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 2, Whole No. 1165. *Cf. ante*, p. 237.

[52] Evidently B. Kurtz.

[53] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 14, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 42, Whole No. 1170.

[54] In an article entitled "Educational Interests and Church Progress-Synodical Platform, Doctrinal Basis, &c." Column 7, front page, and column 1, second page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 21, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 52, Whole No. 1163.

journal), the writer draws his conclusion to the issue at hand:

> Thus we see the cost of war, and though ours is only a war of words—about "symbols" and "symbolism", about "creeds" and "recensions", (I hope Webster tells us what the word means), about "platforms" and "bases", yet the church, like other belligerents, must *foot up the bill*—in all her practical wants and interests she suffers by it, and always to an extent equal to the conflict.
>
> I think, therefore, Mr. Editor, the sooner we give up the better. The church has no means to waste, and needs all our united strength and energy.[55]

Praying for peace, the same writer enters the conflict. The church "need not go among scrambling politicians for terms by which to designate its outline of christian faith". The term "platform" is repulsive. And adds:

> I would not give up gold tried in the fire, even seven times, as our good old confession has been, for all your platforms, however definite.[56]

"The West" saw, in October, the meeting of two English Lutheran bodies, both in the State of Ohio. The one body had been a member of the General Synod since 1843, while the other had just seceded from the Joint Synod of Ohio and taken membership in the larger body at the recent convention in June, 1855. These two district synods represent the conflicting tendencies operating on practically the same soil: the one, following the lead of Dr. Samuel Sprecher, opposing the revival of symbolism and favoring the Definite Synodical Platform; the other, coming out

[55] Column 1, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Friday, December 21, 1855., etc.
[56] *Ibid.*

from an environment where the Henkels had asserted leadership, denounced the document, announcing to the synods that it was uncalled for out here "in the west", and sending an official expression of thanks to the brethren of the East Pennsylvania and West Pennsylvania Synods for their example and friendly counsel.

The English Lutheran Synod of Ohio

held its twentieth annual meeting in Shanesville, Tuscarora County, Ohio, commencing on Thursday evening, the 18th October, 1855, and continued in session until the evening of the 23d. . . . The "recension" of the Augsburg confession of faith as a "Definite Synodical Platform," also claimed the attention of Synod. After due deliberation and interchange of views and feelings, it was adopted as the "Synodical Platform" of this body.[57]

This body is known, after 1857, by the name "East Ohio Synod".

The other English Lutheran Synod, which is known by the name "English District Synod of Ohio", meeting two days later, expressed itself in no mistakable terms, on the document, as follows:

Report of Committee on Definite Synodical Platform.

Whereas, a certain document, professing to have been prepared by mutual consultation of various Lutheran ministers in the east and west, and with a special adaptation to the wants of our church in the west, has been brought to the notice of this Synod, both by its publication, and by action in regard to it by several Lutheran Synods, we deem it due to ourselves and the brethren associated with us in the General Synod, to express the sentiments of this body in relation to the publication in question, therefore,

[57] The minutes of this synod are not accessible. The quotation is taken from the report of the synod's secretary, Tesse Helsell, in the columns of the *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 14, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 42, Whole No. 1170, columns 6 and 7, front page.

1. *Be it Resolved,* That this Synod regrets exceedingly the appearance of such a production, and hereby enters its most solemn protest against it, believing that it is not only subversive of all that is peculiar in Lutheranism, but that it is also in the highest degree unjust to her past history, incorrect and uncandid in the representation of her doctrines, injurious to her character as a church, dangerous to her peace, and utterly uncalled for by anything in the condition of the church in the west.

2. *Resolved,* That we most respectfully and urgently beseech our brethren in the several western Synods which have taken, what we cannot but regard as premature and not properly-considered action in this matter, to reconsider their adoption of a platform, the inevitable tendency of which is to separate them from the Lutheran church, and by its rejection return to the good old ways of Scriptural Lutheranism, and to adhere to the faith as it was once delivered to the saints at Augsburg, as well as at Nice, and at Jerusalem.

3. *Resolved,* That we hereby return thanks to our brethren in the East Pennsylvania and West Pennsylvania Synods for their good example and friendly counsel in this matter, and pray that we may all be more and more established in the unity of the spirit and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

The foregoing preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted . . .[58]

Feeling ran high in the State of Ohio. Synods occupying almost identical territory insisted that the schools they represented carried on the generic character of Lutheranism. The secretary of the body which had adopted the Platform, in his report of the convention in the *Lutheran Observer,* adds the remark:

Here permit me to remark, in answer to those brethren and Synods who so respectfully and urgently beseech us to reconsider, what they regard "as premature and not properly considered action",[59] that

[58] *Proceedings of the English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Ohio, and adjacent States.—The annual convention . . . held at Uniontown, Muskingum county, Ohio, October 25th–29th, 1855.* Quoted from column 4, front page, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, November 16, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 46, Whole No. 1158.

[59] Referring to the other English Lutheran body in Ohio.

we are not at all disposed to throw away what we have espoused; not even though the bull of excommunication should show his horns.

And furthermore, the more we see of their tenacious adherence to symbolism, the more we do feel the necessity of establishing ourselves upon the word of God.[60]

The Synod of South Carolina, although in the corresponding secretary's report noticing the action of the sister synods on the Definite Synodical Platform, passed by the document with no comment whatsoever. This synod met in November, the same year.[61]

The Eastern District Conference of the Alleghany Synod, meeting on November 20, took up the question of the anonymous pamphlet. This "group of ministers" discussed the "errors" pointed out by the Definite Synodical Platform, and after having agreed that such errors, as found in the historic confessions, should so be frankly recognized by the church, recommended to their synod a frank and more explicit opinion on the whole doctrinal question raised. Their resolutions read:

Inasmuch as it is the duty of christian denominations openly and publicly to declare their faith to the world, and as the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church have often been misrepresented by her enemies and sister churches, (and not without a sufficient cause so long as we do not reject the errors contained in our confessions), and as we believe the time has fully arrived to separate the chaff from the wheat, and the Lutheran church to exculpate herself from the charge of the various semi-popish errors attributed to her and set forth in our symbolical standards; therefore,

[60] Column 7, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 14, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 42, Whole No. 1170.

[61] See *Minutes Of the Thirty-second Meeting of the Ev'l Lutheran Synod and Ministerium, of South Carolina and Adjacent States, Convened at Bethlehem Church, Newberry District, S. C., on Thursday, Nov. 8th, 1855, and Continued Its Sessions Until Wednesday, Nov. 14th, Inclusive.* Newberry, S. C., 1855.

Resolved, 1st. We, the ministers composing this present Conference, have no sympathy with Art. 11th of the Augsburg Confession, which teaches private confession and absolution, and as we do not assume the pre-rogative of forgiveness of sin, neither require our members to come to private confession, therefore we have no need of the above article of faith, and teach that Christ alone has power on earth to forgive sins.

Resolved, 2d. That we do not believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, implied and set forth in Art. 11th [?] of the Augsburg Confession, but believe and teach that except a man be born again of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Resolved, 3d. That the following articles, which teach the ceremonies of the mass, deny the divine obligation of the Sabbath, and teach the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist, be recinded [sic] by us as contrary to the doctrines of the word of God and faith delivered to the saints.

Resolved, That these resolutions be presented to Synod for consideration at our next Synodical meeting.[62]

The above preamble and resolutions looked encouraging for the Platform. Spread as they were on the front page of Dr. B. Kurtz's weekly, they evidently were purposely so placed for effect. An entirely different impression is given, however, when it is learned that this Conference consisted of only three ministers, two of which arrived too late to take part in the actual discussion. Under such procedure it was obviously no problem to obtain a "unanimous" adoption by those present![63]

As to the authorship of the document, suspicions had

[62] Column 6, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 14, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 42, Whole No. 1170.

[63] "The brethren present: Rev. P. M. Rightmeyer, the remainder absent. After Conference was duly organized . . . At this state of the proceedings br. Baker, of Altoona, arrived and concurred in the above proceedings. Br. Cyrus Rightmeyer arrived in the evening of the same day . . ." *Ibid.* Rev. P. M. Rightmeyer was Dr. S. S. Schmucker's brother-in-law.

all along been centered upon one, two, or three individuals. One contributor to the columns of the *Lutheran Observer,* in an article opposing the Platform, was certain that

> though many may have been consulted in the preparation of the "Definite Synodical Platform", the work itself was doubtless executed by one man, and if I am not mistaken as to that individual, he has heretofore rendered many valuable services to our church, and will be held in grateful remembrance by posterity.[64]

Another contributor places the full responsibility of the Platform upon a few individuals in the East, who, offering as a reason for the appearance of the document that it was necessitated by the conditions in the West, have other motives than those set forth. He very pointedly asks, if the document, as it claims, was prepared chiefly for the Western brethren,

> Why, then, was it sown broadcast over the *East.* Why is there no intimation that this was its main object? Why were *eastern* workmen employed as its principal constructors? Why was it *printed* in the *East,* and commended so carefully to "the synods in connection with the General Synod", whose strength is so well known to be chiefly in the *East?*

And then he draws the conclusion:

> Obviously this is an after-thought—the fact of the thing being suggested in the *West* being no reason whatever for its being confined to that region, to say nothing of its being morally certain that our Western brethren would not have been willing to move in this matter unless they had expected a simultaneous movement in the East . . . No! this movement originated in the East. . . .[65]

[64] Column 5, front page, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, November 2, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 44, Whole No. 1156.

[65] *Ibid.*

The same writer was willing to point his finger definitely to "Baltimore" as the source of the document and of such articles as had been defending it under the signature of a "Western Man".[66] Not without a keen sense of wit mingled with sarcasm was it pointed out that such names as "east" and "west" carried loose distinctions.

> Mr. Editor,—The West is a great country, extending indefinitely west of the Alleghany mountains, and it is but a few years since it comprehended the country to the *East* of that great natural boundary even as far as the Susquehanna river, and even *Baltimore* was, perhaps, at one time ranked among western towns. It is therefore, among things possible that in the prevailing tendency to *"restore the ancient land-marks"*, and prefer the old to the new some one may have been impelled to resuscitate the earlier use of this word "western", so that *"A Western Man"* might be found residing no further west than the vicinity of Baltimore.[67]

Finally, in the issue of the *Lutheran Observer* for December 7, 1855, there appeared the first of a series of articles under the signature of "S. S. S.", which was to put at rest any further suspicions as to the authorship of the document. Professor S. S. Schmucker was now willing and ready to attach the initials of his name to the Definite Synodical Platform:

> The writer feels some special obligation in the matter, as he aided in its construction, and participated in those consultations at Dayton, of which it is the result.
>
> Its immediate projectors neither sought notoriety, nor designed to shun responsibility. The actual authorship was never intended to be a secret, and is now generally known; yet as the plan was the result of many minds, and the execution of the revision of the Augs-

[66] *Ante*, p. 257.

[67] Column 5, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Friday, November 2, 1855, etc.

burg Confession consisted merely in reprinting the doctrinal articles of that creed *unaltered,* except the omission of the parts which teach those tenets rejected by the great majority of our American Lutheran churches, it was deemed a dictate of modesty to add no individual names.

This was especially the case, as the publication was a mere proposal, to be acted on by the Synods individually, and to derive all its authority, if any, from such synodical action; and still more, because though it was intended at present for the immediate use of western churches, it was by request prepared in the east, according to the plan agreed upon.[68]

It is safe to say that this acknowledgment caused no surprise, since the name of the Gettysburg professor had been linked with the document almost from the very beginning. Dr. Charles Philip Krauth, a colleague of Professor S. S. Schmucker at Gettysburg,[69] had written his son, Charles Porterfield, before this public acknowledgment of authorship, saying:

The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession doesn't seem to go down well. It has received many hard blows. My colleague don't disclaim the authorship, so that it has a daddy. A more stupid thing could hardly have been originated. . . . *Quem Deus Vult perdere prius dementat.*

How will it end? I have thought in smoke. But I have all along had fears, and they are strengthened of late, that it will divide the General Synod. It is said that my colleague is determined to press the matter to the utmost. I suppose he thinks that he has drawn the sword, thrown away the scabbard, and now must fight. . . .

There ought to be an antidote to the *Observer* somewhere.[70]

The names of Dr. Benjamin Kurtz and Dr. Samuel Sprecher, both of whom had bent every effort, by way

[68] "The Definite Synodical Platform. No. I. What Is It?" Column 6. p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, December 7, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 41, Whole No. 1169.

[69] *Ante,* p. 167.

[70] *Charles Porterfield Krauth, D.D., LL.D.,* by Adolph Spaeth, D.D., LL.D. Vol. I, p. 372.

of pen and personal persuasion, to obtain favorable action on the document, had also been linked among its progenitors. Their acknowledgment, which came later, also caused no surprise.

The series of articles over the signature of "S. S. S." treats the whole affair in an apologetic way. A review of the argument there presented should be noted.

The cry against the Definite Synodical Platform is unnecessary. Prejudices have been awakened by certain leaders, taking advantage of the many who "have had no opportunity of seeing the publication".[71] The publishers have been "rather unaccommodating to the public" heretofore; but arrangements have been made that a copy of the Platform may now be had by any desiring it. With a candid examination of its contents, prejudices ought to be removed.

Since, now, three district synods have officially adopted it as their doctrinal expression, the document has assumed "an ecclesiastical character". Arguments should therefore be based on the merits of that Platform, and any insinuations against its authors should cease.

A misunderstanding seems to have arisen among a number as to what basis of fellowship is presented in the document. The East Pennsylvania Synod men, for example, have taken it to be intolerant and too proscriptive, whereas a truer understanding will prove the very opposite. Readers are herewith notified that the basis of fellowship, the Platform proper, is found

[71] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 7, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 41, Whole No. 1169.

only in Part I of the document. This is the doctrinal basis to be subscribed by all.[72] It consists of (1) the Apostles' Creed; (2) the Nicene Creed, and (3) "the unaltered doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession".[73] The first two creeds are not the subject of controversy, since they are held in universal authority. As to the "American Recension", it is an accurate and complete translation of the German and Latin originals, presenting those doctrinal articles "with the mere omission" of five tenets which "have long since been rejected *publicly, openly, and repeatedly,* by the great mass of the ministers and churches of the General Synod": (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the Mass; (2) of Private Confession and Absolution; (3) the denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath; (4) Baptismal Regeneration; and (5) the real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist. Here, then, "that new school, or American Lutherans, have . . . every particle of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession which they believe, and more they do not want, and are under no obligation to profess or to circulate".[74] Now, the whole doctrinal Platform is contained only in the first part, the two universal confessions and the "American Recension". This is a sufficient basis for coöperation.

Part I, therefore, can easily be adopted by everybody; it contains doctrines believed by the old and new school Lutherans alike.

The second part contains such doctrines and prac-

[72] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Friday, December 7, 1855, etc.
[73] Column 7, *ibid.*
[74] *Ibid.*

tices as found in the historic symbols which are regarded by the great majority of Lutherans in this country as erroneous. This second division does not form a part of the Doctrinal Platform. The reader may justly ask: Why, then, was this part added? In reply to that query, the following reasons may be given: these "errors" are published (1) to show just wherein a large majority of American Lutherans differ from the historic symbols of the church; (2) to assign reasons for their rejection; (3) to reveal the attitude of the large majority toward those symbols as not having a binding authority to-day; and (4) to proclaim in a public and official way what has been believed and practised in a private and unofficial way.

The Platform is not, therefore, proscriptive and intolerant. It reveals a marked "superior liberality". It expressly avows its willingness to serve as a basis for those who, even though differing on such questions as "baptismal regeneration" and "the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Eucharist", subscribe to it, as it is, and are willing to coöperate in peace and harmony.

It is to be noted, the writer continues, that the doctrinal Platform is based on the same principle as has been in practice by those "old Lutherans" who, publishing and circulating the entire Augsburg Confession, have agreed to coöperate with such of their number as have differed, in silence, on doctrines there presented.

"S. S. S." acknowledges that this misunderstanding is due to the loose way the writer(s) of the document used the term "Platform". A second edition will be issued in which this shall be more explicitly stated.

viz., that the term "Platform" is to denote only the first part of the document.[75]

Two of the synods[76] have agreed, continues the writer, to maintain the liberal position of the General Synod. He is satisfied with this decision. This action is interpreted as no reflection on the document; but, rather, as due to a lack of consciousness that the old-school brethren are pressing their intolerant propaganda among the churches in the East. What is transpiring in the West, however, is sooner or later to be an issue in the East.

The writer then answers the charges as preferred against the document in three of the church papers. The *Lutheran Standard,* wrapped up under the influence of the Henkels, denounces the Platform as deviating from the entire symbolic system, although not charging it from departing from the liberal basis of the General Synod. That it departs from the symbolism characteristic of a certain period in the history of the Lutheran Church is not to be denied. Yet it is not so long ago, the writer points out, that the Synod of Ohio "adopted a new Platform—one to which she had not required assent before",[77] tightening her own confessional lines. The charge then, should be directed at home in the history of that group itself.

The *Evangelical Review* comes forth with a review of the "Definite Synodical Platform",[78] insinuating

[75] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, December 21, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 52, Whole No. 1163.

[76] Referring to the action of the Synods of West Pennsylvania and Maryland. *Ante,* pp. 241 ff; 254 ff.

[77] *Cf., ante,* pp. 144–146.

[78] *Cf., ante,* pp. 253–254.

that the churches of the General Synod profess to receive the entire Augsburg Confession and all the other Symbolical Books. That review, "evidently proceeding from an old-school pen", shows that its author has forgotten the history of the American Lutheran church. It is, otherwise, well known, that "nine-tenths" of the Symbolical Books "were never seen by the great majority even of our ministers, until within the last ten years!"[79] What is more incredible, the same reviewer describes the Platform as an "*emasculated* one!" This term is supposed to mean "deprived of its chief vigor, or strength, or excellence". Can it be possible that this critic believes, when the five omissions are made, that the Augsburg Confession has been deprived of its vitality? Is the chief excellence of that venerable document to be found "in these obsolete errors"? "A melancholy sentiment, indeed!" "S. S. S." then goes on to say:

> We had supposed the grand and cherished doctrines of the illustrious reformers of the sixteenth century, which threw a halo of heavenly light around the renovated church, to be such as the following—the doctrine of the unity of God and the holy Trinity of persons in the godhead—divinity of the Saviour—the fall and depravity of man, both by nature and practice—the glorious work of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ—regeneration by the Holy Spirit—justification by grace alone through faith—the divinely appointed sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the immortality of the soul, and eternal rewards and punishments.[80]

"But no; according to this writer, a creed is emasculated—deprived of its chief excellence and power,

[79] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 21, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 52, Whole No. 1163.
[80] *Ibid.*

which contains *all these,* but omits private confession and absolution, and the other obsolete tenets above enumerated! Alas, for the church of the Redeemer, if such views should prevail, and our Zion be thrown back three centuries in her progress . . ."

The *New York Lutherischer Herold* comes out proclaiming the news that any deviation from the historic symbols is treason to the cause of Lutheranism! This paper suggests that the Platform has been concocted by an alliance of professors and students at the Gettysburg Seminary, and demands synodical investigation! To which "S. S. S." says:

> So little do some . . . of these foreigners . . . know how to appreciate the liberties of America, either civil or religious, so imperfectly do they understand the liberal principles of the General Synod, with which this Definite Platform is in entire harmony.
>
> Had that writer first acquainted himself with the constitution of the Seminary, as a modest man ought to have done, he would have found that the freedom of instruction, though not so latitudinarian as in many Lutheran institutions of Germany, where many of the professors are avowed Unitarians, is far from being as bigoted as he would desire; he would find that it obligates the professors only to the "*fundamental* doctrines of the sacred Scriptures, as taught in the Augsburg Confession," and again to "the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as they are *fundamentally* taught in the Augsburg Confession." . . .[81]

That writer should remember that the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg was erected by the hands of *American Lutherans!*

Such utterances from bigoted disturbers of the peace demand action.

[81] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Friday, December 21, 1855, etc. He goes on to call attention to the professorial oath; see *ante,* pp. 78–80.

Does not the course of our old Lutheran brethren prove that we shall never again enjoy the peace we once possessed, until we do adopt an open declaration of our sentiments by definitely disavowing those errors which are rejected by us all, and placing ourselves on an open, explicit platform before the world.[82]

Let it be understood that the friends of the Definite Synodical Platform have undergone no change of doctrinal views as taught at the Theological Seminary of the General Synod and believed by a large majority of the constituency of that body. Why should any Synod be censured for promulgating officially what has often been published by its individual members and held privately—especially so, when such action is forced upon it by aggressors?

In a third of the series of articles, entitled "The Propriety of This Discussion—Who Commenced the Adoption of New Platforms?"[83] "S. S. S." replies to those critics who had been declaring that the document served no other interest than to divide and distract the church and that the entire controversy was bringing about a "pernicious influence" everywhere. "S. S. S." declares his sincerity, in the conviction that circumstances in the church had shown him his duty in speaking out and taking part in the whole affair:

Would that I could share this conviction, and occupy my time in more pleasant labors for Christ! But self-denying duties are often at least as useful as others; and, when the sense of their obligation presses on us, we are not at liberty to shrink from the task. To those who may object to these discussions we reply that our position is a defensive one.[84]

[82] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Friday, December 21, 1855, etc.
[83] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 28, 1855. Vol. 24, No. 1, Whole No. 1164.
[84] *Ibid.*

To the question offered, why, inasmuch as the document was placed in the hands of the Eastern clergy and circulated among Eastern churches for their consideration and adoption, the leaders in the East were not consulted in the drafting of it, "S. S. S." replied:

> A number of brethren beloved, whose services in the church would entitle them to participation in the preliminary deliberations of the Platform had also been intended for their use [sic], may have felt surprise at not being consulted.
>
> This emotion would be just if the Platform had been designed as a general matter, but having been intended primarily for some western synods, with no definite view as to its ulterior history, and each synod having by express provision of the General Synod an undoubted right to act independently on this subject, as long as it retained the fundamental doctrines of Scripture as substantially set forth in the Augsburg Confession, a universal consultation was not demanded by the proprieties of the case, nor was it practicable for want of time during the meeting of the General Synod.
>
> Since a wider publicity has unexpectedly, *though we doubt not providentially,* been given to the Platform, it seems to be the duty of every liberal minded Lutheran to examine its principles with impartiality. . . .

The writer then proceeds to present a brief history of the American Lutheran Church, with a view to show that the symbolists of the present day are "the aggressors" in this whole controversy, by forcing the "American Lutheran" school to express itself more explicitly in contradistinction to the propaganda of rigid adherence to the confessions of the church.

The Lutheran Church in America has had a confessional basis built on broad lines. The first Platform of a different character was that exacted by the Missourians, who pledged themselves to all the former Symbols of Germany.[85] The second Definite Platform was

[85] *Ante,* pp. 125–126.

adopted by the Joint Synod of Ohio,[86] which likewise made no provision "for the consciences of those of their ministers who rejected some of the doctrines taught" in the former Symbolical Books. Both of these groups, however, attracted little attention among the churches in the General Synod, with the exception of some "enlightened ministers" who "regretted the step and foresaw its evil results."

But what has aroused fear in the breasts of those who have for many years had the welfare of the General Synod and the American Lutheran Church as their most cherished and serious concern was the Definite Platform which the Pennsylvania Synod recently adopted in its Liturgy,[87] which exacts from the candidates for the ministry an assent "to all the former Symbolical books of the Lutheran Church".[88] "S. S. S." then calls attention of the reader to that Liturgy, citing page references, which has caused him grave concern. This new Liturgy of the Mother Synod proposes a test far more specific and detailed than the Definite Synodical Platform. What has come over this Synod, which for more than fifty years has required no other test than assent to the Bible? Is it not a clear indication of the successful propaganda of the recent "considerable accessions of Symbolic members" in the East? This published Liturgy is "four times as long as that prepared and used by the patriarchs of our American Lutheran Church, Muhlenberg, Handschuh, Kurtz, Kunze, Helmuth, Endress, Lochman,

[86] The conservative background of the Ohio group has already been sufficiently stressed. See, especially, *ante*, p. 146.

[87] *Ante*, pp. 144–145.

[88] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 28, 1855. Vol. 24, No. 1, Whole No. 1164.

Schmucker, and others . . .'' [89] Why this change of ordination-requirement, this new Definite Synodical Platform in the Mother Synod? And then the same author proceeds to point out the radical doctrinal changes that have quietly, and heretofore, without protest on the part of ''American Lutherans'', been adopted in the various synodical groups. The whole gist of the argument is: it is high time for the new-school Lutherans to awaken from their sleep and assert themselves in a more explicit manner. They have the same right to adopt a Definite Platform as their brethren.

The first pamphlet to be published in opposition to the Definite Synodical Platform was that by Rev. J. N. Hoffman, under the title, *The Broken Platform; or, A Brief Defence of Our Symbolical Books Against Recent Charges of Alleged Errors.*[90] This appeared in January, 1856. This little work was hastily [91] and poorly written and failed to impress either group. Much of the discussion was presented in the form of rhetorical questions and much space devoted to trivialities. The friends of the Platform are accused of being the aggressors in a movement to split the church.[92] The Augsburg Confession is partly rejected because it cannot be bent to suit their ''unaided reason''.[93] Their new Platform may some day suffer the same fate of recension and alteration—and then what have they

[89] Column 5, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, January, 11, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 3, Whole No. 1166.

[90] A bound pamphlet of ninety-six pages by the "Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, Penn."—Philadelphia, 1856.

[91] *Op. cit.*, p. vi.

[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

gained?[94] Can it be that these authors of the document consider themselves as having "perceptions more acute . . . judgment more matured and trustworthy", than a Luther, a Melanchthon, a Chemnitz, or a Gerhardt?[95] Can it be that American minds have the quality of grasping the profundity of "the giant intellects of the Old World"?[96] Better that these disturbers of the peace, leave the Church and find fellowship elsewhere.[97] "S. S. S." claims, in an article in defense of the Platform, that the Seminary at Gettysburg has been erected by *American Lutherans*.[98] Does "S. S. S." believe that our good people gave their money with the intention of aiding an *American* Lutheran Church, in establishing a *new* Lutheran Church?

Go ask the thousands who gave their contributions—inquire of the widow, who gave her mite—ask the poor man who brought his pittance—the children who offered their pennies, *whether they* ever had an idea of an *American* Lutheran Church! Alas, how difficult to sustain a bad cause. Nay! Was it explained to each contributor, that *Gettysburg* was to establish a *new* Lutheran Church, in contradistinction to *the* Lutheran Church?[99]

Both the *Lutheran* Seminary and the *Lutheran* Periodical[100] have been promoted by Lutheran money![101] The people

gave their offering or their name, without ever dreaming that their own symbols might be endangered.

[94] *The Broken Platform*, etc., by Rev. J. N. Hoffman. Pp. 15, 16.
[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 19.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[98] *Ante.*, p. 276.
[99] J. N. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[100] Referring to the *Lutheran Observer.*
[101] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

Referring to the possibility, now since the venerable Confession of the Protestant Church has thus been altered, that this precedent will bring about further alterations and recensions—who knows where it all will end?—the author waxes rhetorical.

Thus, the commencement once made and *allowed* in the Church, will increase in frequency, until its results will sweep over her like a blasting simoon, until her glory shall have departed, and the fragments of her once proud walls, and now noble structures, will mournfully tell the tale of her dilapidation, and the very winds of heaven, as they pass over her broken altars, will sigh forth the melancholy strain, "Ilium fuit." [102]

Can it be that these self-appointed revisers of the Augsburg Confession would "assert, that God had no hand in its production?" [103] And directing his words to them, the author charges them:

You therefore have greater confidence in your own judgment, than in the combined wisdom of the Protestant world! [104]

Editors and theological professors are somewhat "alienated . . . from the practical life of the ministry",[105] and hence:

Their philosophic schemes; their formal calculations; their supereminent scientific and literary investigations, are but illy suited to the progressive development, the practical activity, and the increased energy of spirit that now heaves up, like some plutonic fire, the purified elements of a better life! This requires the steadfast efficiency, the practical tact, and the sanctified energy of men, who can bring their reason into subjection to the faith once delivered to the saints; and, who will never agree to sacrifice a particle of the truth to the *pragmatism* of a utilitarian and latitudinarian age.[106]

[102] J. N. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Such, on the whole, is the character of the refutation to the Definite Synodical Platform as offered in this pamphlet. Some of the "errors" are separately considered, and flatly denied. The doctrines of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not discussed since "we deemed [them] too serious and important for a hasty examination".[107] Since

> this whole controversy has its origin in the works of Dr. S. S. Schmucker [108]

the author devotes a good part of the discussion of the disputed "errors" to the writings of that distinguished theological professor, attempting to show inconsistencies and misinterpretations of the symbols found in his published works.

In a summary the doctrines discussed in this pamphlet receive the following treatment: (1) "S. S. S." tries to make the public believe that the "Romish" *mass* was taught in the Augsburg Confession,[109] which we deny as "neither taught nor even remotely sanctioned by *any* of our symbolical books, not even by the Augsburg Confession".[110] The term "mass" is employed in that Confession "to mean the celebration of the Lord's Supper". (2) The practice of "exorcism" is not condoned in a single *authorized* edition of the Symbolical Books. It appears, it is to be admitted, in Luther's *Taufbüchlein,* which was "a little manual on baptism, which existed previously . . . [and] re-published by him, at first without alteration, in Latin".[111]

[107] J. N. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. xi.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

It appears, too, in some early editions and in the late one by Mr. Ludwig, of New York, but these are "*imperfect* and *unaccredited* editions". "S. S. S." seems to think that "*anything* received into the authentic edition of the Concordienbuch" is "on that account SYMBOLICAL".

Is then, each publisher's *introduction* symbolical, Doctor? Perhaps the index, Doctor, possesses "this character." [112]

Exorcism "was never rendered symbolic by any act of any public assembly, or by any authority . . . it was never regarded as an essential part of the Book of Concord." [113] At most, a spiritual significance has been attached to the practice, among Protestants.[114] The motive back of these agitators of the church is that of attempting to remove the confidence of the church in its historic confessions. To accomplish this end "the world has to be ransacked to find the "tenet" of "Exorcism" [115] to aid in the attempt. (3) The early Reformers taught "the Divine authority and obligation of the Lord's day",[116] insisting only that the people in observing such a day should not regard it as a meritorious act.[117] Look only to the Catechisms of Luther and see how "the institution of the Lord's day receives its due importance".[118] As for the reason that nothing specific is taught in the Augsburg Confession on this subject, "there was no occasion for the Confessors

[112] J. N. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[116] *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 77–78.
[117] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

to say anything more on the subject, than merely to notice it, as it were *in transitu*".[119] The charges in the Definite Synodical Platform on this subject are based only on "the *negative* part of the Confession" [120] where the Sabbath is discussed in the light of the abuses in the church of Rome.[121] (4) In a further "attempt to render our Symbolical Books unpopular" [122] the Augsburg Confession is said to teach "Private Confession and Absolution". Not one word is said in the twenty-eighth Article of that Confession of either practice.[123] The extract in the Platform "is wrested from its connection, and employed to support a bad cause".[124] "Confession and absolution" have a "*Scriptural basis*".[125] The *principle* of it has been adopted by nearly all the denominations—*absolution* being pronounced, in behalf of the Saviour, to the *penitent* and *believing*. The mode or form may be different, private or public; but the principle rests in the very character of the Gospel.[126] Auricular confession, "the duty of enumerating all our sins privately to a priest", which practice was rejected by the Reformers, is another question. Lutherans have always insisted that the announcement of pardon is conditional. "S. S. S." "attempts to prove from other authors a kind of absolute pardon administered by the pastor" which is a gross error.

[119] J. N. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–76.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[121] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[122] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[123] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[126] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

That this refutation of the Definite Synodical Platform did not satisfy even the opponents of that document is not surprising. It required more than mere "fireworks" to meet the arguments of Professor S. S. Schmucker, whose preëminent learning remained unquestioned. To such a task, Rev. W. J. Mann, pastor of a Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, was urged by a number of his clergymen friends. In the early part of the same year, Dr. Mann appeared before the public in a pamphlet of forty-seven pages bearing the title, *A Plea for the Augsburg Confession, in Answer to the Objections of the Definite Platform: An Address to All Ministers and Laymen of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the United States.*[127]

It was easily the best and most sane discussion on that side of the question which had up to this time appeared. Even Professor S. S. Schmucker, soon after

[127] "The history of the origin of this little pamphlet . . . is thus related by a member of the Publication Board itself:

" 'One day, during a friendly colloquium, the conversation turned on the Definite Synodical Platform. This document had come to us anonymously, bearing no visible sign nor mark to indicate its origin. Not to converse about a document so shrouded in mystery would be stranger than the document itself. At this fraternal colloquium, Rev. Mr. Mann expressed his views on the Augsburg Confession. At the close of his remarks one of the Board, Rev. Mr. Hutter . . . remarked: "What a pity we had not a stenographer in our midst, to take down the remarks of Brother Mann." Following up this merely incidental remark, Rev. Dr. Stork moved that Brother Mann be requested to write out and submit to the Board his remarks, which was agreed to. One week later, Rev. Mann brought the manuscript sheets of his little volume; they were read, and that brother himself proposed to issue the work on his own responsibility, without the imprint of the Board. From some of the views asserted by the writer several of the Board openly dissented, and, to avoid their objections, a portion of the work was rewritten by the author. It was only then ordered to be printed.' " *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, Adolph Spaeth, Vol. I, pp. 361–362.

its publication, paid it the tribute of calling it "a truly christian and gentlemanly pamphlet".[128]

Before taking up the discussion of the "errors" alleged to be found in the Augsburg Confession, Rev. Mr. Mann has a few preliminary remarks to make. He gives the author (s) of the Definite Synodical Platform the credit for their "honest avowal of their partial apostacy" [129] in this their "Declaration of Independence". But let it at once be noted that the authority of a Luther and a Melanchthon is here at stake and the most venerable of all Protestant confessional statements.[130] This whole business is a serious affair, and

> We would to God Luther and Melanchthon could rise from their resting-places before our Lutheran Church, and with their own eloquence and learning, earnestness and power of spirit, plead their own cause. . . .[131]

One thing is certain, that the "Confession, once delivered at Augsburg", which was a carefully framed document,[132] has "not been properly understood" and is even "grossly misrepresented" in this "fatherless and motherless child, the Definite Platform".[133] Here we have a group of men "who intend to change, to an extent, the doctrinal basis of the Lutheran Church" [134]

[128] Column 2, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, February 29, 1856.

[129] *A Plea for the Augsburg Confession, in Answer to the Objections of the Definite Platform: An Address to All Ministers and Laymen of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the United States.* W. J. Mann, Pastor of St. Michael and Zion Churches, Phila. For the Lutheran Board of Publication. P. 4. Philadelphia, 1856.

[130] See pp. 5, 9, 10, 14, *ibid.*

[131] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and yet maintain their lineal descent in the church which, for so many years, has carried a distinctive character and doctrinal position. What is more serious, they demand of their brethren to accept *their* Platform and would "now unlutheranize every one who could not or would not coincide with their views." [135] The times demand watchmen. There could be no more unsuitable day than now to undertake a revision of those venerable proclamations of our church fathers, who were called of God to defend the faith—this in a day of "materialism, rationalism, and infidelity".[136] Let all Lutherans know that when the Augsburg Confession is shaken from its place of authority, the very cornerstone of the Lutheran Church is shaken! [137] It is to be regretted that the Church of the Reformation which, within the last twenty or thirty years, has experienced a revival of the piety of former days and which has been returning to "the old doctrinal standards",[138] should now be shaken and thwarted in this progressive movement. The Church should now move cautiously, and in no haste, before it issues a "writ of errors" [139] against its one universally accepted confession.[140]

The first "error" charged to the Augsburg Confession of 1530 is that it approves of the ceremonies of the mass. What shall here be said? The article in question is the twenty-fourth, or in the second part,

[135] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

that which bears the title "*Articles on which there is dispute; enumeration of the* ABUSES *which we have abrogated*".[141] Now, this twenty-fourth article, which carries the superscription of "The Mass", is a discussion of the differences existing between the Lutherans and the Romanists on practices connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The term *mass* is employed by the Reformers, in common with the Catholics of that day, as a synonym for the Lord's Supper.[142] Only in later years was the term, as such, given up. The Definite Platform "does not mean to say, that the Augsburg Confession does approve of the *doctrines* of the Romish Church in regard to the Lord's Supper",[143] *i. e.,* transubstantiation, but it says that the Augsburg Confession *approves* of the *ceremonies* in connection with the mass (or the Lord's Supper).[144] What, then, is the charge? It is that Luther condoned too much of "the popish paraphernalia" in connection with the mass. But this is a misrepresentation. True, Luther kept many of the outward forms—he was no iconoclast—but he everywhere insists that "outward forms and signs [are] . . . of secondary importance".[145] The Lutheran Church has always felt at liberty on such questions. May not there be a method on the part of the present-day agitators, that "calculated to arouse in the hearts of many less informed members of the Lutheran Church, misgivings against

141 W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
142 *Ibid.*, p. 15. (foot-note).
143 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
144 Ibid., p. 17.
145 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

their own spiritual mother''[146] by such charges as this?

We cannot understand how members of the Lutheran Church can prefer, against our Augsburg Confession, the odious charge of her "approval of the ceremonies of the mass", whilst the Augsburg Confession itself enumerates the mass amongst those abuses the Lutheran Church had abolished.[147]

The second charge, likewise, seems calculated to arouse misgivings against the venerable Confession. The Lutheran Church has rejected auricular confession, the Romish practice of enumerating to the priest an itemized account of mortal sins,[148] and has held to confession, both public and private, as a means which the church has instituted ''to bring repentance and consolation nearer to the hearts of sinners'',[149] and the announcement by the minister ''in the name of Christ'' of conditional absolution. Why this fear of private confession?

We allow a minister to hear a confession from his whole flock. Why in the name of common sense should we regard it as wrong in him to hear the confession of the individual members thereof?

Thousands of times the spell of sin might be broken if there only would be an open confession . . . before another brother. . . .

We would to God that all our church members had that confidence in our ministers! What a praise that would be to those ministers; it would speak volumes for them![150]

Why this fear of conditional absolution? The minister is but the appointed officer of the church to carry out the injunction of Christ in Matthew, 18:18.

[146] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–18.
[147] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[148] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[150] *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

The third charge, *viz.*, that the Augsburg Confession denies the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath, is not true. The article in which the subject is discussed is the twenty-eighth. Now, any reader of that article will see that what the Reformers objected to was that the keeping of any holy day, even the Sabbath, is not to be considered a meritorious work. The reader will remember the abuses that obtained in the Roman Church on all such observances, which was against the principle of justification by faith alone. Wittenberg and Rome had no dispute on the question of the divine institution of the Christian Sabbath.[151] Both observed Sunday as a day of rest and meditation. The Augsburg Confession "nowhere, in any way, teaches that we should not keep the Christian Sabbath in a Christian way, or that the keeping of the Christian Sabbath rightly understood, is not a divine obligation".[152] The Article contends "for evangelical freedom" over against the "intolerable burdens" placed "upon men's consciences" by the Church at Rome.[153] The argument presented in the Definite Synodical Platform in behalf of Sunday as *the* divinely appointed day rests on precarious statements: (1) to say that the *examples* of the apostles are inspired, is dangerous. "This is not warranted by the Scriptures".[154] When Peter *"dissembled"*, was this act an inspired one? (2) To bring forth exegetical arguments in favor of carrying over Old-Testament Sabbath rules to the Christian Sabbath, is unwarranted. Such procedure

[151] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[153] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

cannot rest on any "special, clear, unequivocal dictate of Christ".[155] The Augsburg Confession has been wisely guarded on this point, teaching that the Christian Sabbath "is an ordinance made by the Church".[156] To sum up:

It is easy to see that the difference between the Augsburg Confession and the Definite Platform is, by no means, as great as it at first might appear. And both are unanimous in their declaration against all abuses which will have a tendency to impede the holiness of the Lord's day. Both are harmonious also in this point, that the "essence of the Old Testament institution consists, not in the particular day of the week, though that is now fixed, but in the religious observance of one day in seven." [157]

The fourth and fifth charges of "error", *viz.*, that the Augsburg Confession teaches the doctrines of "baptismal regeneration" and "the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Eucharist", only reveal that here the venerable Confession and the Definite Platform are "indeed very far apart".

The Lutheran doctrine maintains that the sacraments have an *intrinsic value.* The *Definite Platform* seems to regard them as mere signs which may have a tendency to promote piety.[158]

Here there are marked differences, and they should be frankly recognized. Can it be that our venerable fathers, who so prayerfully and carefully framed the Mother Symbol of Protestantism, went astray on the doctrines of the sacraments? Do not our present-day theologians know that the Lutheran Church has "always regarded her teachings on this question of the

[155] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[157] *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.
[158] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

sacraments as the Shibboleth . . . as her peculiar signature''? [159] The *Definite Platform,* however, regards these doctrines as of a non-fundamental character—here, surely, is an issue! In other words it may thus be stated: the one holds to the view that the sacraments are ''mysteries'' and the other mere symbols or signs.[160] Why should there be any difficulty in regarding, for example, the scriptural teaching that, in baptism, regeneration takes place? [161] ''This doctrine, however, is not to be understood as if the new creation was fully completed by new generation. It is complete in as far as a live seed is complete in itself.'' Admitted, we have here a ''mystery''; but even the authors of the Platform hold to some of the Scriptural mysteries, *e. g.,* the doctrine of the Trinity,[162] the incarnation of God, etc. Why should there be any difficulty, moreover, in holding the scriptural doctrine that, in the Lord's Supper, ''poor earthly creatures'' are made ''partakers of his celestial nature (2 Pet. 1.4) in the most solemn rite of his Church''?[163] Of course, the main stress in the decision of the whole sacramental question must be laid on the *words of Christ, touching the sacraments.*

We cannot suppose our Savior saying one thing, whilst meaning another. Thus, for instance, in saying, I am the way, the vine, the door, he does not mean to say, I *represent* the way, &c. He *is* these things personally and really. So, also, when he says to his disciples, *this is my body, this is my blood.*[164]

[159] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.,* p. 35.
[160] *Ibid.,* pp. 37–38.
[161] *Ibid.,* p. 36.
[162] *Ibid.,* p. 40.
[163] *Ibid.,* p. 37.
[164] *Ibid.,* p. 40.

It is a strange thing that the authors of the Platform insist so rigorously to "speak of our Christian Sabbath as a *'divine institution,'* for which they have no word of Christ", and at the same time "seem so anxious to interpret in the most shallow manner the very words of Christ, wherewith he instituted his sacraments."

Concluding his discussion, the author makes a plea to his readers to remain faithful to the distinctive features of the historic Lutheran doctrines as contained in this Symbol. He admits that the American Lutheran Church, in an earlier day, had departed from such doctrines. But those were days of the "influx of rationalistic tendencies" from Germany.[165] The Lutheran Church in those early days was without its own seminaries, and many of the ministry did not "enjoy the benefits of a solid . . . theological education." The result has been that many of the clergy have found "our Lutheran home . . . rather uncomfortable . . . and . . . thought it no harm to take out a pillar at this place, to raise a partition wall at another place, to invite strangers into the family circle, and to suit the old home to their conveniency",[166] all because there was a lack of appreciation of the genius and peculiar character of historic Lutheranism.

The war of words which had been waged in the columns of the *Lutheran Observer* reached its climax in the closing weeks of 1855 and the early weeks in 1856. Such epithets as "croaking old Lutherans",[167] "old

[165] W. J. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[166] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

[167] Column 7, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, January 4, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 2, Whole No. 1165.

fogy Lutherans",[168] "self righteous Orthodoxites" "whose religion consists mainly in observing the sacraments and scenting and hounding heresy among those who do not believe exactly as they believe",[169] were hurled upon those who fought the Definite Synodical Platform. "J. A. B.", on the other side, declared:

> I now before God and in the face of the church, solemnly declare, that before I would submit to be sworn on a new creed at every change [referring to the "Definite Synodical Platform"], I would be branded as a heretic and driven out of the church.[170]

All this, in the presence of

> S. S. S., who may be presumed to speak *ex cathedra*.[171]

This newspaper controversy, as is evident, was leading nowhere, except into aggravating the situation more and more. It was recognized by both sides that the time to call a halt had arrived. The editor of the paper announced that he had been earnestly requested, "both by Symbolists and Platformists, to make an end of the controversy in the Observer",[172] and he was ready to comply.

In February an armistice was signed by leading men on both sides, in a formal notice in the *Lutheran Observer*. Five clergymen had taken the initiative, H. L. Baugher, M. Jacobs, M. L. Stoever, F. A. Muhlen-

[168] Column 6, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, December 21, 1855. Vol. 23, No. 52, Whole No. 1163.

[169] *Ibid.*

[170] Column 5, front page, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, January 4, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 2, Whole No. 1165.

[171] *Ibid.*

[172] Column 3, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer*, Baltimore, Friday, February 29, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 10, Whole No. 1173.

berg, Jr., C. P. Krauth;[173] and thirty-six other names, including that of Professor S. S. Schmucker, were appended to the declaration for peace! This document carried the name of "Pacific Overture" and is highly significant:

PACIFIC OVERTURE

Whereas a controversy has, for some time been carried on in our church papers, on the subject of a *Definite Synodical Platform,* which has extended over our whole church; we the undersigned, some being friends and others opponents of said Platform, believing that the continuation of the discussion will tend to distract the church and divert her attention from the great and urgent enterprizes of christian benevolence, the cause of Missions, of Education, of Church Extension, and from other efforts for the promotion of genuine piety. And believing that the points of difference entertained among us, are non-essential, and that if so treated by both parties, they are no barrier to friendly coöperation; and fully assured that it is only by agreeing so to treat them, that an ultimate disruption of our beloved Lutheran Zion, with all its baneful effects, carrying strife and division throughout Synods and Conferences and individual congregations, can be averted, and the harmony and peace of our church in this country preserved. Therefore,

Resolved, That we, the undersigned, deprecate the further prosecution of this controversy, and hereby agree to unite and abide on the *doctrinal basis of the General Synod,* of absolute assent *to the Word of God,* as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and fundamental agreement with the Augsburg Confession; and that we will use our best efforts to induce our respective Synods as a sufficient ground for harmonious coöperation among the churches of the General Synod, and that we will persevere in this effort so long as there is any hope of attaining this result.[174]

[173] Column 3, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, March 7, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 11, Whole No. 1174.

[174] Column 2, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, February 15, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 8, Whole No. 1171.

To the Document was added the notice: "We would be pleased to add any other names to the above document, if forwarded to the proprietors of the *Observer.*"

This compromise, reverting to the doctrinal position which had obtained in the General Synod, seemed to undertake to *reassert* that basis of Lutheran fellowship which had existed on paper before the controversy. It was a skilful effort to effect harmony. Professor S. S. Schmucker, in the light of his articles in the same weekly, could conscientiously subscribe to it. Benjamin Kurtz, however, was not willing to compromise, and he openly declared so.[175] But there still remained those Western synods which had adopted the Platform and to which the leading protagonist of the document felt obligated. To make sure that no one would misunderstand his signature to the "Pacific Overture", Professor S. S. Schmucker served the following notice of explanation:

CARD OF DR. S. S. SCHMUCKER

Mr. Editor:—In this number of the Observer there will probably appear a document, entitled *Pacific Overture,* signed by a number of our most respectable and useful ministers, both old and new school. Among these names will be found my own; and in order if possible to give success to this christian effort to promote peace among brethren, as well as to prevent any misapprehension of my participation in it, I desire to say a few words.

By the preface to the Platform the public are apprised, that it was prepared at the request of a number of Western brethren, who felt the necessity of adopting something in self-defense, against the numerous publications and efforts of ultra Lutherans in those regions.

In the course of some articles in vindication of the Definite Synodical Platform, published in the Observer some few weeks ago over the initials of my name, I stated that our church in the East had not yet felt the absolute necessity of such a document, as we were as yet less annoyed by any old school movements; although some

[175] Column 3, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, February 29, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 10, Whole No. 1173.

recent measures of the Synod of Pennyslvania [sic] and others, were fast creating that necessity; and that in these, as well as the intolerant manner in which the Platform was denounced by English and German old-Lutheran papers, denying the rights of a Lutheran Synod to adopt anything else than the former symbolic books, had inclined me to the belief that the adoption of the Platform in the East will also be required.

Yet there are many of the most decided American Lutherans amongst us, who as yet cannot believe, that the Pennsylvania Synod will carry out in practice the symbolic restrictions embraced in their new liturgy; but say the design of that body was merely to give a historical recognition of the Symbolical books, whilst in practice they will allow full liberty in non-essentials. This I was myself also told by one of the most intelligent and esteemed members of that Synod.

These brethren also entertain the belief, that in order to arrest the agitation about the Platform amongst us, our school friends will agree to the proposed *compromise* on the doctrinal basis of the General Synod, of absolute assent to the word of God and fundamental agreement with the Augsburg Confession; with the understanding that the points of difference amongst us should be regarded as non-essential, and be left to the conscientious conviction of each individual.

Having stated in my last article on the Definite Platform, that if the Pennyslvania [sic] Synod would even yet adopt the General Synod's doctrinal basis, it would remove the difficulties, and allay the apprehensions of the American Lutherans, and restore peace to this section of the church, I could not consistently refuse my signature.

Yea, as the peace of the church has always been dear to my heart, and as I have devised measures of self-defence only in cases of necessity, and from a sacred sense of duty; I gladly coöperate in this pacific effort, and pray that those dear brethren may be willing to accede to the proposition.

Should they unfortunately decline doing so, American Lutherans will be undeceived as to the supposed liberality of their old-school neighbors, and be better able to understand the import of the symbolic restrictions of their new liturgy, and of the necessity of ulterior measures of self-defence.

This compromise, as represented to me before signature, was only to relate to the East, and to have no reference to the Western

Synods, which are differently situated, and have in my opinion properly adopted the Platform.

Its pledge involved the obligation of abstinence from the newspaper controversy on these disputed points, and was understood not to preclude a reply to pamphlets or books in the same form, if any have recently been, or may be published.

Accordingly I am engaged in preparing a reply to a truly christian and gentlemanly pamphlet, entitled, "Plea for the Augsburg Confession", by the Rev. Mr. Mann, in which the positions of the Definite Platform are controverted. As my reply will include a considerable amount of documentary evidence; some little time will be required for its preparation. . . .

S. S. SCHMUCKER.

Gettysburg, Feb. 13, 1856.[176]

Professor S. S. Schmucker's statements in the above notice concerning the Pennsylvania Synod as creating the necessity for the Platform, and concerning his interpretation of this Overture as not applying to the Western synods, brought a public protest by the original framers of the armistice document in the following issue of the same church weekly.[177] It is evident that the feelings aroused in the controversy were not easily conquered merely by the signing of names to a peace document. The newspaper controversy, however, was abruptly terminated; and the church at large settled down, waiting to hear what further might be done, inasmuch as a number of district synods had not convened since the publication of the Definite Synodical Platform, and the matter evidently would come up at their several conventions.

Professor S. S. Schmucker, however, was busily en-

[176] Columns 1 and 2, p. 2, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, February 29, 1856. Vol. 24. No. 10, Whole No. 1173.

[177] See Column 3, p. 3, *Lutheran Observer,* Baltimore, Friday, March 7, 1856. Vol. 24, No. 11, Whole No. 1174.

gaged preparing a book to be published as a final defense of the Definite Synodical Platform. He had announced that in signing the "Pacific Overture" he did not feel his signature bound him to be silent in other than newspaper publications. Rev. W. J. Mann's book was to be answered.[178] It is evident that the Platform must be presented in as favorable light as possible if the district synods, which were to meet now in the spring, were to act favorably upon it. And so, in April, 1856, there came forth, under his name, a bound volume of 192 pages, carrying the title: *American Lutheranism Vindicated; Or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics: Including a Reply to the Plea of Rev. W. J. Mann.*[179] This book deserves a brief review.

Since Rev. Mr. Mann has called in question the accuracy of some of the interpretations of the Augsburg Confession presented in the Definite Synodical Platform, it is due to the cause of truth to examine once again the venerable Confession.[180] That author has conceded the claim that this Symbol is the only one universally received by the Lutheran Church and has therefore confined his remarks to that Confession alone.

Now, what has been the attitude of the American Lutheran Church toward this Venerable Symbol? Rev. Mr. Mann has but recently arrived and taken up residence in this country [181] and hence no doubt lacks an acquaintance with the history of our church in this

[178] *Ante*, pp. 286; 299.
[179] Baltimore, 1856.
[180] *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
[181] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

country.[182] He and every one else should know that the General Synod and its Theological Seminary have been bound explicitly "to the Augsburg Confession, only so far as the *fundamental* doctrines, not of that confession, but of the *Scriptures* are concerned".[183] Hence, it has been the practice to honor individual freedom in such matters as do not pertain to a fundamental character. The Definite Synodical Platform has pointed out five errors in that Confession in Part II, all of these having to do with *non-fundamental* doctrines. The question may fairly be raised, "What is a fundamental doctrine, then?"

A *fundamental* doctrine of Scripture is one that is regarded by the great body of evangelical Christians as essential to salvation, or essential to the system of Christianity; so that he who rejects it cannot be saved, neither be regarded as a believer in the system of Christian doctrine.[184]

Now, in the history of our church in this country, it is a notable fact that many of our conspicuous American Lutheran divines have not held slavishly to all the doctrines set forth in the Mother Symbol. The reader may examine for himself the published writings of such men as Probst, Endress, F. C. Schaeffer, Hazelius, Lintner, Krauth, G. B. Miller, Baugher, Bachman, and

[182] Rev. W. J. Mann came to America in 1845. See p. 51, *Memoir of the Life and Work of William Julius Mann. Together with a Few Sermons and Short Extracts.* Printed for Private Distribution. Philadelphia, 1893.

[183] *American Lutheranism Vindicated; Or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics: Including a Reply to the Plea of Rev. W. J. Mann.* S. S. Schmucker, D.D. Baltimore, 1856, p. 4.

[184] *Ibid.*, p. 4. The list of *fundamental* doctrines given is the same as before published by the same author. *Lutheran Manual,* etc., p. ix. *Cf.,* the summary of fundamental doctrines proposed by him in his "Apostolic, Protestant Confession" in 1838, *ante,* p. 113 ff.

Lochmann [185] to assure himself of that fact. Dr. Lochmann, himself

published an edition of the Augsburg Confession, in his work, entitled Doctrine and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in which *he made more omissions than are found in the American Recension;* and yet no one found fault with him for doing so.[186]

All these men stand before the church in public

dissent from this venerable symbol, long before the Definite Platform was thought of.[187]

The Pennsylvania Synod fifty years ago did not require assent of its ministers to the Augsburg Confession,[188] and even the General Synod itself, at the adoption of the first constitution in 1820, when dissatisfaction with some parts of the Augsburg Confession was openly expressed, "inserted a clause in her constitution, giving *power both to the General Synod and to each District Synod to form a new Confession of Faith,* for their own use." [189]

The charge, therefore, that the Definite Synodical Platform is a radically new departure and a creator of strife and dissension cannot be honestly set forth in the light of the history of the American Lutheran Church.[190]

Rev. Mr. Mann charges us with making Luther and his coadjutors "heretics"! This is a false charge.[191]

[185] *American Lutheranism Vindicated,* etc., pp. 39–43. *Cf., ante* Chapters II–IV.
[186] *Ibid.,* p. 40. *Cf. ante,* pp. 52–55.
[187] *Ibid.,* p. 43.
[188] *Ibid.,* p. 39 *Cf. ante,* pp. 21 ff.
[189] *Ibid.,* p. 39. *Cf. ante,* pp. 37–39.
[190] *Ibid.,* pp. 43–44.
[191] *Ibid.,* p. 26.

We take it that the word "heretic" is a name descriptive of those who depart on doctrines of *fundamental* importance. Such is not our charge. That Luther and the Reformers did not reach a final word on scriptural interpretation we still maintain. With three centuries between the Reformers and us, we ask, has no new light been thrown on the Scriptures through philological and exegetical studies?[192] The Reformers were surely not infallible.[193]

The Augsburg Confession is a conciliatory document.[194] It was framed by men who had come out of a Catholic background, and it is not to be expected that they were entirely free to divorce themselves, in all matters, from that background. Luther himself

> was a faithful papist until he was upwards of *thirty years* old, when he began to protest against the errors of Rome.[195]

Is it to be wondered that he and others were unable to shake off *all* the superstitious practices and doctrines of the Church of Rome?

To say that we should follow the writings, literally, of these early Reformers, regardless of their faithful interpretation of Scripture, is to adopt that "corrupt, political motto [of Stephen Decatur] . . . *Our Country right or wrong.*"[196] Let it ever be remembered that human creeds are fallible and need revision. Each age is to interpret Scripture afresh for itself.[197]

[192] *American Lutheranism Vindicated*, etc., p. 36.
[193] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[194] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, "Disadvantages under Which the Augsburg Confession Was Prepared."
[195] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[196] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[197] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

When differences on doctrines of non-fundamental character are emphasized, the precepts of Christ are unheeded and division is courted.[198] The Bible itself is "paramount to all human authority"; so, with all this in view:

> Whilst, therefore, we love Luther much, let us, my brethren, ever love Christ more.[199]

Referring to the Definite Synodical Platform itself, the author claims that it is "a faithful and definite exhibition of the import of the *generic* doctrinal pledge of the General Synod." [200] It is to be admitted that it is "more symbolic than the General Synod's doctrinal basis", but this is brought about by the present Symbolical agitation in general.[201] The present agitation demands a more definite expression. The doctrines taught therein, however, are the same as contained in the author's *Popular Theology,* written twenty-one years ago.[202]

"*Symbolism is . . . no part of original Lutheranism.*" [203] The present revival of confessionalism is *Post*-Lutheran and *Ultra*-Lutheran.[204] *American Lutheranism* holds only to the fundamental doctrines taught by the church, and the "American Recension" is its doctrinal expression.

As to the charges of Rev. Mr. Mann that the author(s) of the Platform failed to understand the

[198] *American Lutheranism Vindicated,* etc., p. 20.
[199] *Ibid.,* p. 46.
[200] *Ibid.,* p. 15.
[201] *Ibid.,* p. 16; p. 8.
[202] *Ibid.,* p. 5. *Cf., ante,* p. 104 ff.
[203] *Ibid.,* p. 163.
[204] *Ibid.,* p. 164.

Confession of 1530 in calling certain doctrines there taught as erroneous, the author takes up the several charges and answers them.

The "mass" and the "Lord's Supper" are *not* synonymous terms.[205] The Platform maintains that Luther retained the *Romish ceremonies* of the mass, *e. g.*, the elevation of the host, *after* the Augsburg Confession was written.[206] A historical appreciation of the Confession, therefore, admits that that earlist of Protestant symbols maintains a Romish custom, although it was very early given up.[207] To substantiate this claim, the author quotes the Reformers themselves, as well as a number of authorities. He denies the charge that in his own published writings any inconsistency may be found with the point of view suggested in the Platform.[208] If that earlier Confession be made binding, the twenty-fourth article, which "signifies the mass in its specific sense" [209] (*i. e.*, the Romish ceremonies attending the celebration of the Eucharist), would require of us to observe the sacrament in a similar way as did the Reformers in 1530! [210]

Rejecting auricular confession, the Reformers kept private confession. Private confession, however, as an ordinance, is "confessedly destitute of Scripture authority".[211] The author freely admits the advantages of private interview between pastor and people—but denies the right of the church "to invent *a new or-*

[205] *American Lutheranism Vindicated*, etc., pp. 74, 79.
[206] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[207] *Ibid.*, pp. 65 ff.
[208] *Ibid.*, pp. 92 ff.
[209] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[210] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[211] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

dinance in Christ's church for any purpose." The Augsburg Confession plainly teaches such a rite. As such it was practised by the early Reformers. The whole rite of private confession and absolution is dangerous "and most injurious to the interests of spiritual religion." [212]

On the question of the divine institution of the Christian Sabbath, the author maintains (and quotes a number of authorities, even that of C. F. W. Walther of the Missouri Synod!) that the Augsburg Confession denies that that day is *divinely instituted;* merely setting it up as a day *appointed by the church.*[213] Rev. Mr. Mann thinks that the Confession was concerned merely with *abuses.* It is granted that the Reformers pointed out that any legal observances as such are not to be considered meritorious. But that is a different question.[214] That Luther and Melanchthon did not maintain the day as divinely appointed, may be shown from their published works.[215] Here "our American churches" take issue with the views of the Reformers, and with the twenty-eighth article of the Confession, and hold that the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath, is a divine and not a mere human institution. The apostles "when engaged in the specific and appropriate duties of that office, for which they were inspired . . . were as much under the guidance of the Spirit in their *actions,* as their words." [216] Thus their "*inspired* example" in observing the day of the Lord's resurrection

[212] *American Lutheranism Vindicated,* etc., pp. 103–104.
[213] *Ibid.,* pp. 107–111.
[214] *Ibid.,* pp. 110–111.
[215] *Ibid.,* pp. 111–115.
[216] *Ibid.,* p. 120.

as a day of special religious convocation "is obligatory on Christians in all ages." [217]

In regard to the sacraments the author says: "We not only admit, but strenuously affirm, that the sacraments have an important *intrinsic* influence. . . . But the real point of dispute is the *precise nature* of the influence exerted by the sacraments." [218] The view that he would maintain, in opposition to that presented by Rev. Mr. Mann, who regards the sacraments as "mysteries",[219] is: "they have an *intrinsic efficacy* by virtue of the truths symbolically represented by them, and an *additional specific efficacy* in virtue of their peculiar nature, in connexion with the influence of the Holy Spirit, to awaken, convert and sanctify the soul." [220] The sacraments do not operate *ex opere operato*. Any *special* influence, "so far as known, is the same *in kind* as that of the truth",[221] which is resistible. Pardon of sins or justification is a result of living faith. To promote the faith is the end, the sacraments are the "divinely appointed . . . means and seals of grace".[222] As such they are "mediate, but not immediate conditions of pardon." [223]

Professor S. S. Schmucker freely admits his departure from the views of Luther and the early Lutheran divines on the doctrines of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[224]

[217] *American Lutheranism Vindicated*, etc., p. 119.
[218] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[219] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[220] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[221] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[223] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[224] *Ibid.*, pp. 135–141; 148–150.

Since the views of the author on these questions have been presented in an earlier chapter of this study, and since he avows and reveals no change in his doctrinal position,[225] it is here not necessary to review those arguments.

A brief discussion of "exorcism", to show that a number of approved authorities have pointed out that the practice was for a long time maintained in various parts of the Lutheran Church in Europe and found in authentic editions of the Book of Concord, seems to be an answer to *The Broken Platform* by John N. Hoffman,[226] although that author is not mentioned.

As to the authorship of the Definite Synodical Platform, the following acknowledgment is made:

> As to its authorship, we never denied having prepared it, at the urgent request of some of those brethren, on the plan agreed on by them, and some Eastern brethren of the very first respectability. It was carefully revised by ourselves and Dr. B. Kurtz. . . .[227]
>
> And although an individual necessarily drew up the document, it was prepared according to the plan decided on by about twenty brethren, and claimed no authority until acted on by Synod. The Definite Platform could never, *with truth,* be regarded as the work of a few individuals. Its inception was the result of a consultation of a large number of influential brethren, especially of the West. . . .[228]

The Synod of North Carolina, meeting in May, 1856, gave no notice whatsoever in the minutes of its proceedings to the Definite Synodical Platform.[229]

[225] *American Lutheranism Vindicated,* etc., p. 5. *Ante,* Chapter III.
[226] *Ibid.,* p. 155 ff. *Cf. ante,* p. 283 ff.
[227] S. S. Schmucker. *Op. cit.,* p. 26.
[228] *Ibid.,* p. 32.
[229] *Minutes of the Fifty-second Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, Convened at St.*

The Synod of Central Pennsylvania, however, meeting the same month, took up the document for serious consideration. This Synod had been organized but one year. A committee reported to this body the following resolutions favorable to the Definite Synodical Platform:

Your committee feel that the subject is one of no ordinary importance, involving great responsibility. Upon the action of this Synod may depend the glory of God, the peace and prosperity of the church, and our individual freedom or oppression as ministers and laymen in the American Lutheran Church.

Your committee recommend the following:

Resolved, 1. That the time has come, and circumstances have made it necessary for the American Lutheran Church, definitely and unequivocally to define her position in reference to the disputed points of the symbolical books.

Resolved, 2. That the teachings of God's word, and the declarations of the immortal Luther himself, make it binding upon us to amend, alter, and modify our confession of faith, whenever we have sure and safe reasons to believe that doctrines are taught, or views implied, which are contrary to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, our only infallible guide in matters of faith and practice.

Resolved, 3. That we heartily approve of the design of the American recension of the Augsburg Confession, and sincerely believe that the doctrines taught therein are in accordance with God's Holy Word.

Resolved, 4. That we will never permit our hands to be bound, or our consciences oppressed, by a subscription to extended creeds on non-fundamental doctrines. . . .[230]

This report was adopted. This same district synod went on record as "highly pleased with the ability with

Enoch's Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, Friday Morning, May 2nd, 1856. Greensborough, N. C., 1856.

230 *Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Central Pennsylvania, Held at Mifflinburg, Union County, Pa., from the 15th to the 19th of May, 1856.* Lewistown, 1856. p. 25.

which the Lutheran Observer is edited'' and recommended that church organ to its people.[231] One other resolution passed is also significant:

Whereas, The so called "Lutheran Board of Publication" have committed themselves in favor of Symbolism, by publishing Mr. Mann's Plea, and by refusing to publish Dr. Schmucker's answer to that plea; therefore,

Resolved, 1stly. That we regard the refusal of publishing Dr. Schmucker's answer to Mr. Mann's plea, as unjust and contrary to the professed principles of the Board.

Resolved, 2dly. That we heartily disapprove the action of the Board in this case; and,

Resolved, 3dly. That we cannot encourage or in anywise patronize the said Board of Publication so long as it assumes the right of censorship in our church.[232]

The Synod of Kentucky, meeting also the same month, failed to give any official notice to the Definite Synodical Platform.[233]

On May 18 the German Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the Mother Synod of the Lutheran Churches in America, met for its 109th annual convention. In the light of the preceding controversy, in which the name of this Synod figured so conspicuously, it is safe to infer that the convention was anxiously awaited by the clergy and churches of the General Synod.

One of the district conferences of this body presented the following resolution:

Resolved, That we request the Synod to instruct its delegates to the next General Synod, to propose to that body the question, whether they adhere to the Augsburg Confession as the basis of our

[231] *Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Central Pennsylvania,* etc., p. 26.

[232] *Ibid.,* pp. 26, 27.

[233] *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Kentucky.* Cincinnati, 1856.

Evang. Luth. church, and in case they should answer in the negative, that we withdraw from connection with that body.[234]

This resolution was laid upon the table.[235] The Platform question was then introduced. This

gave occasion to a general expression of opinion by the brethren, *not one of whom advocated its cause.* Many believed that it would be best, at present, to pass over the whole subject in silence, but others were of the opinion that the Synod should bear its testimony, and publicly express its opposition to the Platform.[236]

A special committee was named by the chairman to present a report on the subject. Rev. W. J. Mann's name appears first on the list of names of the committee. The report follows:

Whereas the Evang. Luth. Church in the United States has of late, in certain places, been agitated to a degree threatening to the peace of the church, and likely to awaken unkind feelings, by a pamphlet, entitled: "Definite Platform, &c.," which professes to be an improvement on the Augsburg Confession—the venerable, common, Confession of the entire Lutheran Church, in the old world and the new—and in view of the fact, that as the oldest Evang. Luth. Synod in this country, we feel it our duty publicly to bear our testimony to the faith of our Fathers, in opposition to every innovating attempt to lay violent hands on the ancient foundations of the faith; hoping at the same time, by such testimony, to strengthen the faith of the brethren with whom we desire to remain united in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace:

Therefore, *Resolved,* That we see no reason to express ourselves otherwise than we have done, in the resolutions on this subject, passed by this Synod at Pottsville and Reading [1850 and 1853],[237]

[234] *Minutes of the 109th Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States. Convened in the Church of the Holy Trinity, at Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pa., in Trinity Week; from the 18th to the 22nd of May,* A. D., *1856.* Sunnytown, 1856. p. 22

[235] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

[236] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

[237] *Cf. ante,* p. 144; pp. 146–148.

and that we believe that our opinion of the views presented in the Platform are therein sufficiently expressed.[238]

This report was adopted, and the Pottsville and Reading resolutions reprinted with the report.[239]

The Pittsburgh Synod convened in the latter part of May and expressed itself in a lengthy preamble and series of resolutions on the Platform question. Charles Porterfield Krauth, whose name figures so preëminently in the later history of the Lutheran Church in America, presented the following "Testimony", which was adopted by the synod with but one dissenting vote.

Testimony of the Synod of Pittsburg

Whereas, Our Church has been agitated by proposed changes in the Augsburg Confession—changes whose necessity has been predicated upon alleged errors in that Confession;

And Whereas, These changes and the charges connected with them, though set forth by individual authority, have been endorsed by some Synods of the Lutheran Church, are urged upon others for approval, and have been noticed by most of the Synods which have met since they have been brought before the Church;

And Whereas, Amid conflicting statements, many who are sincerely desirous of knowing the truth are distracted, knowing not what to believe, and the danger of internal conflict and of schism is incurred;

And Whereas, Our synods are the source whence an official declaration in regard to things disputed in the Church, may naturally and justly be looked for; we therefore, in Synod assembled, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, desire to declare to our churches and before the world, our judgment in regard to these changes and these charges, and the alienation among brethren which may arise from them.

1. *Resolved,* That by the Augsburg Confession we mean that document which was framed by Melanchthon, with the advice, aid

[238] *Minutes of the 109th Annual Session of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania,* etc., p. 27.

[239] *Ibid.,* pp. 27–28.

and concurrence of Luther and the other great evangelical theologians, and presented to the Protestant Princes and Free Cities of Germany, at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.

2. *Resolved,* That while the basis of our General Synod has allowed of diversity in regard to some parts of the Augsburg Confession, that basis never was designed to imply the right to alter, amend or curtail the Confession itself.

3. *Resolved,* That while this Synod, resting on the word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith, on its infallible warrant rejects the Romish doctrine of the real presence, or Transubstantiation, and with it the doctrine of Consubstantiation, rejects the Mass and all ceremonies distinctive of the Mass, denies any power in Sacraments as an *opus operatum,* or that the blessings of Baptism and the Lord's Supper can be received without faith, rejects Auricular Confession and priestly Absolution, holds that there is no priesthood on earth except that of all believers, and that God only can forgive sins, and maintains the sacred obligation of the Lord's day; and while we would, with our whole heart, reject any part of any Confession which taught doctrines in conflict with this our testimony; nevertheless, before God and his Church, we declare that, in our judgment, the Augsburg Confession, properly interpreted, is in perfect consistence with this our testimony, and with the Holy Scriptures, as regards the errors specified.

4. *Resolved,* That while we do not wish to conceal the fact, that some parts of the doctrine of our Confession, in regard to the Sacraments, are received in different degrees by different brethren, yet that even in those points wherein we as brethren in Christ agree to differ till the Holy Ghost shall make us see eye to eye, the differences are not such as to destroy the foundation of faith, our unity in labor, our mutual confidence and our tender love.

5. *Resolved,* That now as we have ever done, we regard the Augsburg Confession lovingly and reverently as the "good Confession" of our fathers, witnessed before heaven, earth and hell.

6. *Resolved,* That if we have indulged harsh thoughts and groundless suspicions; if we have, without reason, criminated and recriminated, we here humbly confess our fault before our adorable Redeemer, beseeching pardon of him and with each other to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified, acknowledging him as our only Master, and regarding all who are in the living unity of the faith with him as brethren.

7. *Resolved,* That we will *resist* all efforts to sow dissensions among us on the ground of minor differences, all efforts on the one

hand to restrict the liberty which Christ has given us, or on the other to impair the purity of the "faith once delivered to the saints," and that with new ardor we will devote ourselves to the work of the gospel, to repairing the waste places of Zion, to building up one another in holiness and in pointing a lost world to the "Lamb of God."

And that this our Covenant with Christ and with each other is made in singleness of heart, without personal implication, duplicity of meaning, or mental reservation, we appeal to him before whose judgment bar we shall stand, and through whose grace alone we have hope of heaven.[240]

These resolutions, though lengthy, are presented here in full, since they came later before the General Synod and were officially acted upon by that larger body.

The Definite Synodical Platform caused a lively debate in the Synod of Miami (Ohio) at its convention, May 30–June 3, the same year. The committee appointed to report on the document, although agreeing that the "errors" pointed out by the Platform as contained in the Confession should be officially noticed, disagreed on how far the synod should take cognizance of these "errors". Two reports, majority and minority, were presented, and "after considerable discussion and frequent voting" the majority report "was *unanimously* adopted" with an amendment. This synod gave, then, its official expression on the whole question as follows:

We reject,

1. The approval of the ceremonies of the Mass,
2. Private Confession and Absolution,
3. The Denial of the Divine Obligation of the Christian Sabbath,

[240] *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pittsburgh, Held at Zelienople, Butler County, Pa., from the 22d to the 28th of May, 1856.* Pittsburgh, 1856. Pp. 27–28.

4. Baptismal Regeneration

5. The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist.

We also reject the Preamble, Resolutions and Disclaimer, accompanying what is commonly called the "Definite Synodical Platform"; and receive the original Augsburg Confession of Faith, so far as it is consistent with the foregoing five articles of rejection, relating to the Mass, Confession, Christian Sabbath, Baptismal Regeneration, and the Real Presence.[241]

The synod decided to publish "in pamphlet form . . . the Augsburg Confession—in the spirit and intention of our action in reference to the same—with the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed prefixed, and the Constitution of the Miami Synod", in order that its position might be made clear before the people.[242] It is acknowledged at this same session that "the Augsburg Confession" has been adopted "in a restricted form".[243]

The Synod of Western Virginia, convening in the latter part of August, 1856, received and unanimously adopted the following committee report:

With respect of the pending controversy upon the subject of *"The Definite Synodical Platform,"* to which reference is made in the document submitted to us, your Committee have to record their regret that the unfortunate discussion was ever brought before the Church.

We have always been so accustomed to suppose the questions involved in this controversy to be sufficiently settled, the liberty of private opinion being allowed to all, that we view with painful regret the re-opening of a strife which cannot possibly be productive of good to our beloved Church.

[241] *Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Miami, Held at Tarlton, Pickaway County, Ohio, May 30–June 3, 1856,* pp. 13–15. Lancaster, 1856.

[242] *Ibid.,* p. 18.

[243] *Ibid.,* pp. 17–18.

But since the matter is palpably before the Church, and calls for some expression of opinion on our part, and regarding the "Platform" a fair exponent of our own judgment upon the doctrinal articles in dispute, we respectfully propose the following:

Resolved, That whilst we can heartily accord with the Definite Synodical Platform, yet, deprecating a controversy which we cannot avoid regarding unprofitable, if not really injurious to the cause of Christ, we prefer adhering to the doctrinal basis proposed in the Preface of our Constitution, which is thus stated: "The Augsburg Confession of Faith shall be the point of union in our Churches, inasmuch as we believe that the fundamental doctrine [sic] of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of said Confession. Each minister therefore, at the time of his ordination, and every candidate at the time of his licensure, shall subscribe to said venerable Confession of Faith of our forefathers and Reformers." [244]

A special session was called by the chairman of the Synod of Central Pennsylvania, which had already met the same year [245] to reconsider and redefine its position relative to the Definite Synodical Platform. The action of the body relative to that document had caused misapprehension and misunderstanding among the churches of that body. Had not this district synod unequivocally and unreservedly sanctioned the Platform? The resolutions which had been adopted at that convention need to be more definitely interpreted. Hence, the special meeting of this synod in September, and the redefinition of its attitude toward the document in question:

The committee appointed to prepare a minute for the purpose of more fully defining our position in regard to the definite platform [sic], report as follows:—

[244] *Minutes of the Fifteenth Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Western Virginia and Adjacent Parts,* pp. 11–12. Wytheville, Va., 1856. See also the President's Annual Report, p. 5, *Ibid.*

[245] *Ante,* p. 309.

1st. That the several insinuations and charges coming from various quarters of the church, to the effect that our Synodical action at Mifflinburg, in reference to the platform, was a bona fide adoption of that whole instrument by our Synod, to the exclusion of the creed of the Lutheran Church, and that we seem to have acted for the platform, are all without the least shadow of foundation.

2d. That we have done nothing more than to approve of the design of that part of the platform known as the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession, and that we understand that design to be so to alter or amend our confession, that we can heartily adopt it.

3d. That Synod continues to stand on the doctrinal basis of the General Synod.

4th. That although we have said so much in favor of a part of the platform, it does by no means follow that we have no objections to prefer against it as a whole; therefore,

5th. That this Synod does not approve of the manner in which the platform has been introduced into the church, viz:

6th. That we hold that the only proper mode for District Synods, or individuals connected with the General Synod, to proceed in altering our confession would be—first, to bring the subject before the General Synod; and second, that should said body refuse to entertain the subject, any District Synod might then define its doctrinal position, and demand of the General Synod to declare that it is still a member of that body, or grant it permission to withdraw.[246]

The Synod of Illinois, meeting Sept. 4–8, 1856, although a member of the General Synod, gave no notice to the Definite Synodical Platform in its official minutes.[247]

The New York Ministerium, at its convention in September, unanimously

[246] "The Proceedings of the Special Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Central Pennsylvania, held at Lewistown, Mifflin County, September 3d, 1856"; pp. 36–37 in appendix to *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Evan. Lutheran Synod of Central Pennsylvania. Held at Perryville, Juniata County, Pa., from the 7th to the 11th of May, 1857.* Lewistown, 1857.

[247] *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, of Ill.—Near Arenyville, Ill.* 1856.

Resolved, That the respective delegates from this Ministerium to the General Synod are hereby instructed to vote against the adoption and sanction of the so called Definite Synodical Platform, as the doctrinal basis of the General Synod.[248]

The Hartwick Synod in the State of New York, convening the same month, felt constrained to express itself more explicitly in the matter of its doctrinal position, because of the recent controversy. "After a full and frank discussion", this district synod adopted the following expression:

Doctrinal Position of Hartwick Synod

Whereas, The Lutheran Church in the United States has for some time been agitated by a controversy in reference to the authority of the Augsburg Confession as a standard of faith for our synods and churches; and

Whereas, our synods are the sources whence all official declarations must emanate touching questions of doctrines and discipline;

We, the ministers and lay delegates, composing the Evangelical Lutheran Hartwick Synod of the state of New York, do hereby publish and proclaim the following testimony, as expressive of the doctrinal position of our Synod.

1. We re-affirm our adherence to the doctrinal basis of the General Synod, receiving the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and at the same time endorse the sentiment, "that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession."

2. That whilst we adhere to this basis, we claim the right to enumerate the doctrines which we consider as fundamental, and which we believe are correctly taught in the word of God.

They are as follows: "The articles concerning God," "The Trinity," "The divinity of Christ," "The Son of God and his mediatorial work," "Repentance," "Justification by faith," "Obedience as an evidence of our faith," "The resurrection of the body," "A future

[248] *Minutes of the Sixty-first Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York, and Adjacent States and Countries, Held at St. Luke's Church, Valatie, Columbia County, N. Y. . . . September 6th . . . 10th, 1856,* pp. 33–34. Albany, 1856.

judgment, and a state of rewards and punishments in a future life." To doctrinal views set forth in our confession we cheerfully subscribe.

As however there are articles in our confession, which are susceptible of different constructions, this Synod, without stopping to argue the question, whether or not these articles, "when fairly and properly interpreted" teach the objectionable views which have been deduced from them, hereby adopts the following testimony as expressive of the doctrinal position of this body, viz:

That this Synod, resting on the word of God, as the *sole* authority in matters of faith, on its infallible warrant rejects the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—rejects the Romism [sic] doctrine of the real presence or transubstantiation, and with it the doctrine of consubstantiation; rejects the mass, and all ceremonies distinctive of the mass; denies any power in the sacraments as an *opus operatum*, or that the benefits resulting from the sacraments can be received without faith; rejects auricular confession and priestly absolution; holds that there is no priesthood on earth except that of all believers, and that God only can forgive sins; and maintains the sacred obligation of the Lord's day, as of divine appointment, to be sacredly regarded by all Christians.

Finally, That whilst this Synod, gives this public expression to its doctrinal basis, it will ever be regardful of the views and feelings of our brethren who may differ from us, and will cheerfullly [sic] extend to them the same freedom of opinion in all matters of faith, which we claim for ourselves.[249]

The Alleghany Synod, which had not been ready to express itself on the questions raised by the Definite Synodical Platform at its previous convention in 1855,[250] was prepared at the convention of 1856 to express its doctrinal basis more explicitly. The violent controversy of the year had now forced the issue upon this body.

[249] See pp. 19, 30–31, *Minutes of the Twenty-sixth Annual Session of the Hartwick Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York, Convened at Schoharie (C. H.), N. Y., September 13th, 1856.* Albany, 1856.

[250] *Ante*, p. 248, foot-note 19.

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has been agitated by a controversy in reference to the Augsburg Confession, as a standard of faith for our Synods and churches, and as it is always proper, at all times, publicly to declare our doctrinal position to the church and the world,

Therefore, we the ministers and lay-delegates of the Ev. Luth. Alleghany Synod,

1st. Declare our adherence to the *doctrinal basis* of the General Synod, and would exceedingly regret to see that basis disturbed or changed, and at the same time, we reaffirm and endorse the sentiment that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession.

2d. We, as a Synod, renounce, and openly affirm that we have no sympathy with, and reject the following errors:

1. The approval of the ceremonies of the Mass.
2. Private confession and absolution.
3. The denial of the divine obligation of the Sabbath.
4. Baptismal Regeneration.
5. The real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Eucharist.[251]

The Synod of Northern Illinois, likewise not ready to give a formal expression at its convention in 1855,[252] was now prepared to express itself on the question of the Platform:

Resolved, That the Delegates of this Synod to the next meeting of the General Synod be, and hereby are, instructed to discourage and oppose the introduction into the General Synod of the controversy in regard to the symbols of the church and the so-called "Definite Platform." [253]

[251] This declaration, although not declared "adopted", appears on page 23 in the official minutes of *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Alleghany Ev. Luth. Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened in McConnellsburg, Fulton County, Pa., October 16th to the 21st, 1856.* Gettysburg, 1856.

[252] *Ante,* p. 248, foot-note 19.

[253] *Minutes of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois, Held at Dixon, Illinois, October 9th-13th, 1856; with Minutes of the Extra Session, Held at Geneva, Kane County, Illinois, May 8th and 9th, 1856,* p. 17. Chicago, 1856.

The Synod of North Carolina, silent on the questions of controversy in 1856,[254] at its convention in 1857 gave explicit instructions to its delegates to the next meeting of the General Synod:

> Whereas the church, for some time past, has been agitated by a discussion through the columns of the Lutheran Observer, involving a question of vital importance to the interest of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this country; and
>
> Whereas this question may come up at the next meeting of the General Synod, we deem it due to ourselves to declare that we adhere to the *"General Synod's basis."* Therefore, be it
>
> . . . *Resolved,* That our Delegates are hereby instructed to maintain this position on the floor of the General Synod.[255]

[254] *Ante,* p. 308.

[255] *Minutes of the Fifty-third Annual Meeting of the Evan. Luth. Synod & Ministerium of North Carolina, Convened at St. Paul's Church, Iredell County, on Thursday, April 30, 1857.* . . . p. 16. Salisburg, 1857.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESULTS OF THE CONTROVERSY

The doctrinal basis of the General Synod of Lutheran Churches in America, as set forth in the constitution of that body and still in force in 1855, required of its constituent Lutheran synods that they hold to the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as taught by their Church.[1] Having at no time defined, in an official way, what those fundamental doctrines were, this body did not nor could it expect of that constituency a homogeneous doctrinal character on such a broad platform. The constitution was framed at a period in American Lutheran Church history when, among the leaders, there were found divergent theological opinions and marked departures from doctrinal views set forth in the historic symbols of the Church. The period of the beginnings of this organization, as has already been pointed out, was one of confessional laxity, open fraternity, and freedom in theological enquiry.

Through the leadership and influence of S. S. Schmucker, the Augsburg Confession, which was conspicuously absent in the confessional requirements of the ministry of the two oldest American Lutheran

[1] See Section III in Article III of the Amended Constitution of the General Synod printed on page 56 of *Proceedings of the Eleventh Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened in Baltimore, Md., May 8, 1841.* Baltimore, 1841.

synods after 1792, and which was likewise conspicuously absent in the confessional statement of the first general body of the Lutheran Church in America, was definitely recognized in two documents, both of which were framed by him. (1) The constitution of the Theological Seminary, adopted by the General Synod, stated that that institution was to provide the Church with ministers who held to the doctrines of Holy Scripture "as they are fundamentally taught in the Augsburg Confession"; and required its professors to make public acknowledgment that the Augsburg Confession and the Catechisms of Luther are "a summary and just exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the word of God".[2] (2) Again, the same body recommended in a constitution proposed to the district synods that candidates for licensure and ordination be required to affirm, in a public ceremony, their belief "that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession".[3]

The published works of the author of these two documents were open declarations that that theological leader in the General Synod considered the Confession of 1530 to be only *substantially* correct. Whatever ambiguity may have arisen in the construction of that clause in the professorial oath, which referred to that Confession, it is clear from the doctrines set forth in his editions of the *Biblical Theology of Storr and Flatt* and his own *Popular Theology,* not to mention other of his later published works, that S. S. Schmucker did not

[2] *Ante,* p. 79.
[3] *Ante,* p. 83.

hold slavishly to all the doctrines set forth in the Augsburg Confession. Under the charge that he had, in later years, departed from the constitutional confessional requirements to which he had subscribed as theological professor, in his letter of resignation in 1864 to the Board of Directors he denied the charge and defended his doctrinal teachings as having always been consistent with the professorial oath first given in 1825.

> The Constitution of the Seminary, which was adopted at the commencement of the Institution, has continued to direct all its operations till this day. . . . Its doctrinal tests have been statedly repeated before the Board . . . and I am happy here to record the declaration, that I approve of them all at present, as when I framed and first took them. The text book, viz., my Popular Theology, which grew out of my lectures on Dogmatics, during the first few years, has been retained till this day as the basis of my instructions, without the change of a single doctrine. . . .[4]

The anonymous document circulated among the district synods of the General Synod in 1855, and later acknowledged as the product of his pen, may, in the light of his previously published writings, be taken as a gathering together on a credal basis of such doctrinal statements as had already been publicly set forth by him. That document, therefore, cannot be said to contain doctrinal views, as such, new and startling. Moreover, as this study has also shown, other conspicuous leaders in the General Synod had openly been declaring views which reveal that they, too, held to the Augsburg Confession only in a qualified way.

But, as has also been noted, the Lutheran Church in

[4] *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.*, P. Anstadt, D.D., p. 338.

America just preceding 1855 was not the Lutheran Church of 1820. The great inrush of German immigration together with the confessional revival in Germany and America had placed a different complexion upon the constituency of the Lutheran Church in this country. At first this change was not perceptibly felt by the churches of the General Synod, since new groups were organized; but it was not very long before this body was to feel the influence of these new forces and this revival.

It is clear that a definite animus lay behind the Definite Synodical Platform. It was an attempt to check the revival, in America, of that earlier European attitude toward the historic symbols which regarded these as *normative* declarations of Lutheranism. The issue, as it became more clearly defined, may be summed up in such questions as these: Are the historic symbols of the Church mere descriptive statements of theological opinion which obtained in a given period of the Church's history, and, as such, instructive, interesting, and suggestive historical documents; or are they *normative* doctrinal expressions to which the Church must ever remain faithful? May not the Lutheran Church in America develop its own characteristics theological and practical, or must she revert to the written documents of a former day in order to carry out her title to the historic name? What is generic Lutheranism? Does it consist in a rigid adherence to the *minutiæ* of the written theological records of the sixteenth century with which all present opinions are to be conformed, or may it consist in an adherence to the

fundamental doctrines and polity of the Church of the Reformation?

The charge made by the opponents of the Platform that it aimed to discredit the historic confessions of the Church was certainly justified. That was its acknowledged claim. But the discredit sought in the document was directed not against the symbols as *descriptive* doctrinal statements, to be honored as such, but against attributing to them an absolute and *normative* character. To this end, a list of errors to be found in the historic confessions was boldly set forth.

Whether or not the Platform is to be judged correct in those charges of error pointed out in the historic confessions of the Church is a question to be decided by the church historian and by one's own theological opinion. The doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession were intended, as is well known, to be of an irenic character.[5] The aim of the Reformers, at this early stage of their labors and upon this particular occasion, was to present as far as possible such views as would be acceptable to the theologians of the old Church, and at the same time to repudiate the false charges of radicalism which were attributed to the account of the Protestants.

His own historical studies had convinced S. S. Schmucker that this Confession was just such a conciliatory document,[6] that it had not shaken off completely the practices and traditions of the Church of Rome, such as, *e. g.*, the ceremonies attending the mass

[5] *Cf.* the Statements on this point by Schaff in *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, pp. 233–234 of Vol. 1, *The History of Creeds.*

[6] *Ante*, p. 303.

and the practice of private confession and absolution. It was only later that the complete emancipation came. It was, however, not his historical studies alone which led S. S. Schmucker to regard the Augsburg Confession with such suspicion, on these points. He had ever carried an antipathy for ceremonial observances, liturgies, and rigid ecclesiastical customs.[7] Moreover, the passing testimony of that same Confession to the "Lord's Day" did not satisfy his more rigid puritanical training and spirit.[8] Other of the "errors" mentioned in the document, admittedly departing from the doctrinal views of the Confessions, reveal in a similar manner the theological opinions of that author.

Thrust so suddenly upon the district synods of the General Synod, the Definite Synodical Platform demanded an unequivocal stand against the symbols of the Church as well as an open and unmistakable declaration of a *qualified* acceptance of the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

The manner of its introduction into the various district bodies proved displeasing to the large majority. The sentence in the introductory Note which asked that the Platform be received entire "without alteration", as well as the resolution which suggested that each district synod adopt, *viz.*, "that we will not receive into our Synod any minister who will not adopt this Platform, and faithfully labor to maintain its discipline in

[7] His son, B. M. Schmucker, remarked that "the whole cast of his mind [revealed] his aversion to a liturgical service, his rejection of all right of past usage to influence the present."—Article on "Samuel S. Schmucker", p. 157, in *The Pennsylvania College Book, 1832–1882.* Published for the Alumni Assoc. of Penn. Coll., Phila., 1882.

[8] *Cf., ante,* p. 80, foot-note 23.

his charge", proved exasperating. It smacked of dictatorship. The loose way in which the term "Platform" was used in the first edition as a term suggesting the whole document, whereas the author(s) in their defense declared that the term was to cover only the first part, *i. e.*, "Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinary . . ."[9] proved to advance the charge preferred against it by the leaders in opposition, that it was intolerant and proscriptive.

This misunderstanding, together with the tactics of those moving in secret behind the document, set up a feeling of distrust and resentment among many who had yet remained non-committal upon the issues that were raised. It was not alone two schools which had been marking themselves off from one another in the Church before 1855 on the question of attitude to the symbols. There was another group which had not taken to either camp. The symbolical books which had been circulated among the ministry and the people had brought an interest in the study of the declarations of the Reformers. But this study had, with many, not yet brought them to a decided stand. In such a state of suspended judgment, the sudden introduction of a demand, by unknown parties, of an enlistment against the writings of the heroes of the Church, could not fail to provoke suspicion and set up a cautious attitude toward the school represented in the strange document. Given a state of indecision relative to two equally inviting groups, with one suddenly provoking a feeling

[9] *I. e.*, pp. 6–19, *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod.* Philadelphia, 1855.

of resentment, it is not difficult to predict where the lot will be cast.

Whatever mistaken tactics may be charged to the leaders of "American Lutheranism" in the manner in which their document was presented to the public, it must be said that a state of genuine alarm mingled with exasperation were the precipitating forces that lay behind that document. Keenly sensitive to the current movement in the Church which had brought suspicion and distrust to a long cherished ideal—that of theological freedom—together with a growing emphasis on denominational differences with the dethronement of another ideal—that of a larger unity on the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism—had brought S. S. Schmucker, who otherwise had been cool, patient, and deliberative, to join himself with others, of more restless and impulsive natures, in what proved to be a rash and unpalatable procedure. It is only in the light of such a fear that the name of S. S. Schmucker, whose whole program of leadership had been on catholic principles, may be linked with the attempt to set up a more definite doctrinal basis for the Church in 1855.

The Definite Synodical Platform, then, was framed to meet an issue and a new circumstance. Viewed from the standpoint of the Church during the early period of the General Synod, it was a platform definitely and specifically interpreting the General Synod's attitude to the one historic Confession which was officially recognized by that body. It was an explicit definition of what was to be meant by such words as "fundamental" and "substantially correct". The omissions made in the "American Recension" were just such def-

initions. It was, then, the most specific credal document which, up to this time, had been circulated in the General Synod. Viewed, however, from the standpoint of the Church in the period which saw its appearance, the platform proper (that is, not including the second part on "List of Symbolic Errors Rejected") presented a liberal doctrinal basis upon which the two schools of Lutheranism could unite, provided they agreed to relegate their differences to a place outside the circle of Lutheran fundamentals. It is true, as the defender of that document stated, *viz.*, that both schools agreed to the doctrines printed in the "American Recension". But the points at issue were the *omissions*. It is clear that those of the "old school" were not willing to relegate such doctrines as, *e. g.*, baptismal regeneration and the true presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist, doctrines plainly taught by the Reformers and stanchly defended in the sixteenth-century controversy, to a place of non-fundamental character, so long as the symbols of the Church were to be held in such reverence. To subscribe to the Platform meant to acknowledge the *omissions* as non-fundamental—which was just the issue!

Furthermore, a feeling of resentment was provoked, even by those who acknowledged points of difference with the Confession of 1530, by this pruning of the most venerable confession of the Church and of Protestantism. That this had been done before in the Church [10] was a fact to be acknowledged; yet the procedure here in question was to take on an official character by synodical action and not to be a mere individual expres-

[10] *Ante*, p. 53 ff.

sion. Although not in accord with some of the views of the fathers, it was deemed an act of irreverence to alter even by way of omission a document which had gathered around it, in the three centuries, an officious and hallowed character. This conservative temper, so characteristic in religious history, became, through the appeals and arguments of the leaders in opposition, a strong factor in the defeat of that document and a sustaining force in the reaction toward confessionalism. As has been pointed out, many who were in general agreement with the views presented in the pamphlet were alienated from the cause of "American Lutheranism" and were soon the easy prey of the leaders who labored to steer the Church back to a stricter confessional basis.

Before the meeting of the General Synod in May, 1857, the controversy over the Definite Synodical Platform had been carried on to a point of official decision in the majority of the district synods. Three of these bodies, *i. e.*, the Wittenberg Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ohio, the Olive Branch Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the State of Indiana, and the English Lutheran Synod of Ohio (later known as the East Ohio Synod), had adopted the Platform. Two synods, following the suggestions of the Platform, officially recognized the five "errors" in the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and repudiated them, but refused to sanction the document. These were: the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Miami and the Alleghany Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania. The latter synod, however, expressly reaffirmed its adherence to the doctrinal basis of the General Synod.

The Synod of Central Pennsylvania openly declared its approval of the "American Recension" but insisted that it still rested on the doctrinal basis of the General Synod. Similarly, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Western Virginia and Adjacent Parts expressed its own doctrinal position as in accord with the "Definite Synodical Platform" but preferred to remain upon that of the General Synod. Four synods voiced their decided rejection of the document: the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and Adjacent States and Countries, which instructed its delegates to voice its vote against the document in case it came before the General Synod; the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Virginia, which described the document as dictatorial; the East Pennsylvania Synod, which charged the document with introducing changes of the gravest character; and the English District Synod of Ohio, which declared that the basis proposed was subversive to all that is distinctive of Lutheranism. Two district synods offered their protest against the introduction of any new tests of fellowship: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of West Pennsylvania and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland. Two district synods declared that the Augsburg Confession, if properly interpreted, did not teach views objectionable or contrary to the Scriptures: the Hartwick Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York, which also reaffirmed the doctrinal basis of the General Synod; the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pittsburgh, which added its testimony that whereas diversity of opinion had been allowed on some parts of the Augsburg Confession, this did not mean the

privilege to alter or shorten that confession. Two district synods dismissed the whole affair by instructing their delegates to the next General Synod, the one to take a firm stand for the basis of the General Synod and the other to vote against the Platform if the question came on the floor. These were: the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois. One synod disposed of the question by the comment that the views of the body had been clearly stated before and no further expression was necessary. This was the Mother Synod, the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States. Three district bodies gave no official notice whatsoever to the document: the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of South Carolina and Adjacent States; the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois; and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Kentucky.[11]

After the Definite Synodical Platform had met with such a fate in these district bodies, it is not surprising to find the delegates to the suceeding meeting of the General Synod hesitant and afraid to take the matter to the floor of that convention. It was no longer the question of the future of a document—this had already been settled—it was now a question to maintain harmony and peace in this general body. The very life of the General Synod was at stake. No mention of the document appears on the official minutes of that body

[11] The minutes of two small district bodies for the years, 1855–1857, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the South West and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas, are not accessible, although a search was made in the libraries previously referred to.

at this convention.[12] A resolution, however, was passed asking the Board of Publication "to issue no books devoted to the discussion of the existing controversies of the church".[13]

The Definite Synodical Platform, then, failed to settle the issue between the two opposing schools of Lutheranism. It served rather to aggravate the whole situation in the Church. Its failure "to carry" tended to encourage the old school to prosecute its views with more boldness and ardor. Rev. J. A. Brown issued a pamphlet two months after the meeting of the General Synod, attacking Dr. S. S. Schmucker's views on natural depravity, regeneration, and justification and his attitude toward the symbols of the Church, charging the professor with setting up a *new theology* in the Church.[14] To which Dr. S. S. Schmucker issued a short but crisp reply under the title, *Rev. J. A. Brown's New Theology—Examined.*[15] Heresy proceedings were instituted by Rev. J. A. Brown against Professor S. S. Schmucker at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary. Charles Porterfield Krauth, a former pupil of the venerable theological professor, would not suffer such an act of disgrace and of ingratitude and opposed it valiantly.

[12] *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in Reading, Pa., from the 14th to the 20th of May, 1857.* Gettysburg, 1857.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[14] *The New Theology: Its Abettors and Defenders*, J. A. Brown, Philadelphia, 1857. Printed at first in the July, 1857, number of the *Evangelical Review.*

[15] Gettysburg, August 1, 1857. This tract may be found in a bound collection of miscellaneous papers, entitled *Pennsylvania College Papers* in the library of the Lutheran Historical Society at Gettysburg.

No action was taken.[16] The last days of the leading figure in the Lutheran Church in America of the period of organization and growth of the General Synod, and surely the most conspicuous leader since the day of the Patriarch Muhlenberg, were spent very much in the shadows of mistrust and disappointment. Professor Benjamin Sadtler, son-in-law of Dr. S. S. Schmucker, remarks that the Definite Synodical Platform was the cause which "alienated from him many former friends and clouded the evening of his days".[17]

Rev. J. A. Brown was elected as his successor in the Theological Seminary. Leaders in the Church advocating a return to a stricter confessional basis were fast outnumbering those who valiantly had withstood any such move. Dr. S. S. Schmucker's own son, Rev. Beale M. Schmucker, joined forces with the group which his father had hoped might still be in the minority. Charles Porterfield Krauth, who had framed the Pittsburgh Synod's resolutions in regard to the Platform[18] and had written articles in the *Missionary* calling on the churches to continue their support of the General Synod in the crisis of 1857,[19] and who had come to the rescue of his theological preceptor in the matter of the heresy charges, later, in the crisis of that body in 1867, became the conspicuous leader and champion

[16] Dr. A. R. Wentz, curator of the Lutheran Historical Society Library, authorizes the statement (to the writer on January 30, 1925, at Gettysburg) that the minutes of the board, still extant, are silent on the question.

[17] Article, "Schmucker, Samuel Simon, D.D.", in *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, edited by H. E. Jacobs and J. A. W. Haas, pp. 432–433.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 312–314.

[19] *Missionary* (published at Pittsburgh, Pa.). See number for April 30, 1857.

of the type of Lutheranism which the Platform had attempted to check. When the great schism came that year, it was Charles Porterfield Krauth who led the movement and laid down the conservative principles of "The General Council of the Lutheran Churches in North America". The Platform, fastened in the rocks of an earlier day in the Church's history, had left Dr. S. S. Schmucker and a small group stranded as the current of conservative Lutheranism rushed madly by.

The indomitable editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, after having waged an unsuccessful doctrinal war [20] in the Synod of Maryland at its convention in 1856 [21]—attempting to influence that body to declare and recognize the "errors" in the Augsburg Confession as pointed out by the Platform—served notice upon that body, the following year, that he, together with a number of others, desired to withdraw with the intention of forming a new Lutheran synod.[22]

The Melanchthon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, organized in December, 1857, under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, was a direct result of the controversy over the Definite Synodical Platform. As chairman of the committee appointed to draft a "Declaration of Faith" of this body, he presented and the

[20] *Cf.* also *ante*, pp. 162–166.

[21] *Proceedings of the Thirty-eighth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, Held at the City of Frederick, October 18th–22d, 1856.* Baltimore, 1856.

[22] *Proceedings of the Thirty-ninth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, Held at the City of Baltimore, October 15th–20th, 1857.* Baltimore, 1857.

synod unanimously adopted the following doctrinal basis:

I. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

II. We believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession, viz:

1. The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
2. The unity of the Godhead, and the trinity of persons therein.
3. The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. The utter depravity of human nature, in consequence of the fall.
5. The incarnation of the Son of God, and his work of atonement for sinners of mankind.
6. The necessity of repentance and faith.
7. The justification of the sinner by faith alone.
8. The work of the Holy Spirit, in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.
9. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.
10. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.
11. The divine institution and perpetuity of the Christian Ministry and of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

But while we thus publicly avow and declare our conviction in the substantial correctness of the fundamental doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, we owe it to ourselves and to the cause, of evangelic truth to disavow and repudiate with equal clearness and emphasis certain errors which are said by some to be contained in said Confession, viz:

1. The approval of the ceremony of the Mass.
2. Private Confession and Absolution.
3. Denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath.
4. Baptismal Regeneration, and
5. The real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist.

With these exceptions, whether found in the Confession or not, we believe and retain the entire Augsburg Confession with all the great doctrines of the Reformation.[23]

The application for admission of this body into the General Synod in 1859 created a violent storm. Admission was granted, under a divided and registered vote, with the following recommendation:

We would fraternally solicit them [*i. e.,* the Melanchthon Synod] to consider whether a change, in their doctrinal basis, of the paragraph in regard to certain alleged errors, would not tend to the promotion of mutual love, and the furtherance of the great objects for which we are laboring together.[24]

The General Synod had at this convention reached its height. The subsequent meetings of the body show a rapid and certain decline. At the convention in 1862 the seats of the Southern synodical delegates were vacant, because of the political situation in America in 1860. The nation had been rent asunder in a civil war. The division into North and South was carried over in ecclesiastical organizations. The Southern Lutheran bodies formed their own General Synod,[25] taking with them a large constituency from the older body. This break, however, was not due to doctrinal differences

[23] *Proceedings of a Convention of Lutheran Ministers for Forming a new Synod; and of the First Meeting of the Melanchthon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Held in Middletown, Frederick County, Md.—December 1st–3d, 1857.* Baltimore, 1857. Page 9.

[24] *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in Pittsburg, Pa., from the 19th to the 26th of May, 1859.* Gettysburg, 1859. Page 11

[25] *Minutes of the First Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America, Held at Concord, N. C., May 20–26, 1863.* Columbia, 1864.

but was merely the reflection of the political history of the country.

But the war which waged outside was to be carried into the sacred precincts of the church organization itself. The minutes of the General Synod in its next two conventions reveal page after page of discord and dissension. The Platform controversy had left a bad taste and had strained the relationships of cordiality and confidence among the leaders. The admission under protest of Dr. Kurtz's group with its expressed declarations concerning the Augsburg Confession, and the admission in 1864 [26] of the Franckean Synod which had in its constitution given no official recognition to the same Confession, the walking out of the delegates of the Pennsylvania Ministerium as a protest against this admission, and the ruling of the president of the General Synod, Dr. Samuel Sprecher, in 1866 that the Pennsylvania Ministerium was in a "state of practical withdrawal" and therefore could not take part in the initial business of that convention [27]—all bear witness to the distracted state of affairs in this body. The schism, which had been threatening for so many years, came in 1867 with the Mother Synod taking the lead.[28] The American Lutheran Church had reached the end of another period in its history. Instead of centraliza-

[26] *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in York, Pa., May, 1864.* Gettysburg, 1864.

[27] *Proceedings of the Twenty-second Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in Fort Wayne, Ind., May, 1866.* Philadelphia, 1866. Page 4.

[28] The reader is referred to the Chart, (Inside Back Cover), which will reveal the extent of this Schism.

tion upon one large church organization, three large groups emerged from out of the old general body. Each shifted for itself, carrying on its work in a spirit of competition with the others, and carrying over the feeling of strife which had so long been rampant. It has taken the Lutheran Church in America five decades to heal that breach!

The fears of Dr. S. S. Schmucker were not unfounded, as the subsequent doctrinal history of the Lutheran Church in America shows.

The General Synod amended its constitution in 1864, inserting an official acknowledgment of the Augsburg Confession. The amendment reads:

> All regularly constituted Lutheran Synods, not now in connection with the General Synod, receiving and holding with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers the Word of God, as contained in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession, as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word, and of the faith of our Church founded upon that Word, may at any time, become associated with the General Synod. . . .[29]

The Pittsburgh resolutions, framed by Charles Porterfield Krauth in regard to the attitude of that district synod on the questions raised by the Platform,[30] were adopted by the General Synod. The Augsburg Confession, then, was to be understood, henceforth, by this larger body as "in perfect consistence . . . with the Holy Scriptures" when "properly interpreted".[31]

[29] *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in York, Pa., May, 1864.* Gettysburg, 1864. Page 38.

[30] *Ante*, pp. 312–314.

[31] *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention of the General Synod of*

This action, then, on the part of the General Synod, was a repudiation of the Definite Synodical Platform. A broad Platform had been exchanged in this larger body now for a more explicit one.

A more drastic change, however, was pursued among those who followed the Pennsylvania Ministerium and joined forces in a new organization, called by them the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Mother Synod, in "The Call for a Convention" to form the new union, stated that the time had now come for Lutherans in America to take a decided stand upon "the common faith once delivered to the saints, the testimony of which is found in unmingled purity in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in its native, original, and only true sense on which our Church rests as her unchangeable confessional foundation." [32] The General Synod has lost its right to that name by the action of such as were "in undisguised or covert warfare with the Confession of our Church on every point which gave her distinctive being over against the errors of Rome, and of rationalistic sectarianism." [33]

Rev. Prof. M. Loy of the Joint Synod of Ohio, preaching the opening sermon at the organization of this body, took as his outline:

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Assembled in York, Pa., May, 1864. Gettysburg, 1864. Page 40.

[32] *Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from Various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States and Canada Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, at Reading, Pa., Dec. 12, 13 and 14, A. D. 1866. Also the Opening Sermon by Rev. Prof. M. Loy.* Pittsburgh, 1867, p. 4.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

The Conditions of Christian Union . . . these are:

I. Having the same Faith in the same Truth.
II. Having the same Confession of the same Faith.
III. Having the same Judgment under the same Confession.[34]

Absolute agreement with "all perfectly joined together in the same mind"[35] was the ideal and aim presented to this new organization.

A survey of the printed proceedings of these organization meetings reveal that a reaction of a most decided and stringent type had set in. Charles Porterfield Krauth, who later characterized his Pittsburgh resolutions as "immature",[36] in the now widely known "Fundamental Principles Of Faith and Church Polity" adopted by the General Council, set up the theses:

That Confessions . . . must be accepted in every statement of doctrine, in their own true, native, original and only sense. Those who set them forth and subscribe them, must not only agree to use the same words, but must use and understand those words in one and the same sense. . . .

The Unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church . . . depends upon her abiding in one and the same faith. . . .

The Unaltered Augsburg Confession is by preëminence the confession of that faith. The acceptance of its doctrines and the avowal of them without equivocation or mental reservation, make, mark and identify that Church which alone in the true, original, historical and honest sense of the term is the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The only Churches, therefore, of any land, which are properly in the Unity of that Communion, and by consequence entitled to its name, Evangelical Lutheran, are those which sincerely hold and truthfully confess the doctrines of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. . . .

In thus formally accepting and acknowledging the Unaltered Augs-

[34] *Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from Various Evangelical Lutheran Synods. . . . Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg confession. . . . 1866*, etc., p. 22.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[36] *Charles Porterfield Krauth, D.D., LL.D.*, by Adolph Spaeth, D.D., LL.D., Vol. I, p. 380.

burg Confession, we declare our conviction, that the other Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, inasmuch as they set forth none other than its system of doctrine, and articles of faith, are of necessity pure and scriptural. Preëminent among such accordant, pure and scriptural statements of doctrine, by their intrinsic excellence, by the great and necessary ends for which they were prepared, by their historical position, and by the general judgment of the Church, are these: The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Catechisms of Luther and the Formula of Concord, all of which are, with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in the perfect harmony of one and the same scriptural faith. . . .[37]

This doctrinal position was unanimously adopted by the newly formed body and inserted in its constitution.[38] Thirteen district synods joined hands and subscribed to these "Fundamental Principles of Faith . . ." at that initial convention.

A strict adherence to the historic symbols was henceforth to characterize this body and its constituent synods; a confessionalism akin to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and of a more rigid spirit from that set up by the Patriarch Muhlenberg. The Symbols having acquired a normative character, the Lutheran Church in America rested its theological position in those confessional standards. The post-Muhlenberg development of confessional laxity, open fraternity, and spirit of independent thinking gradu-

[37] *Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from Various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States and Canada Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, at Reading, Pa., Dec. 12, 13 and 14, A. D., 1866. Also the Opening Sermon by Rev. Prof. M. Loy.* Pittsburgh, 1867. Page 11.

[38] "Constitution of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America", p. 20 in *General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, First Convention, Fort Wayne, Indiana, November 20 to 26, A. D. 1867.* Pittsburgh, 1867.

ally gave way to strict confessional conformity, closed communion, and limited and prescribed sphere of theological inquiry.

That a turning-point involving far-reaching consequences for the Lutheran Church in this country had been reached in the nineteenth century controversy, cannot be denied. The vantage point of later years will bring a truer appreciation and a sounder evaluation of that Crisis. A developing *American* Lutheran theology was suppressed and in its place there came the rebirth of an inherited European Lutheran theology in America.

Conservative Lutheranism had won, and "American Lutheranism" was buried in the débris of outworn and outgrown vestures of an earlier day.[39]

[39] Three bodies of Lutherans in America, *viz.*, the General Council, the General Synod, and the United Lutheran Church in the South, merged into one body in 1918. The doctrinal basis of this body, known as the United Lutheran Church in America, is given in APPENDIX C (*q. v.*).

APPENDIX A

THE APOSTOLIC, PROTESTANT CONFESSION

For which the reader is now prepared, is nothing more than a selection of such articles or parts of articles, on the topics determined by the several confessions, as are believed by all the so-called orthodox churches. Not a single word is altered or added. The entire creed is in truth the common work of the Protestant family, every part having been composed by one or other of its members. The confessions of all the prominent churches which have separate creeds, were duly regarded in the selection, in order that the whole might be, and be regarded as, the *common property* of the Protestant church. The *authority* of this confession is based on the fact, that every sentence, every idea of it, has been sanctioned by one or other of the Protestant conventions that adopted the creeds from which the articles are selected, and by the denominations receiving those creeds. The whole creed has therefore already received the ecclesiastical sanction of acknowledged churches. Its sanction in its *present form* and *for the proposed purpose,* it can only receive by the successive action of such ecclesiastical bodies, and churches and individuals as in the Providence of God may receive it, and publish their assent to it, not as renouncing any of their former opinions, but as regarding this as the test for discipline and communion.

The Apostolic, Protestant Confession

Part I. THE APOSTLES' CREED

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.—The third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right

hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic or universal church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

Part II. THE UNITED PROTESTANT CONFESSION

Art. I. *Of the Scriptures*

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.[1] Under the name of the Holy Scriptures, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these:

Genesis,	Isaiah,	Epistle to the Romans,
Exodus,	Jeremiah,	I. Corinthians,
Leviticus,	Lamentations,	II. Corinthians,
Numbers,	Ezekiel,	Galatians,
Deuteronomy,	Daniel,	Ephesians,
Joshua,	Hosea,	Philippians,
Judges,	Joel,	Colossians,
Ruth,	Amos,	I. Thessalonians,
I. Samuel,	Obadiah,	II. Thessalonians,
II. Samuel,	Jonah,	I. Timothy,
I. Kings,	Micah,	II. Timothy,
II. Kings,	Nahum,	Titus,
I. Chronicles,	Habakkuk,	Philemon,
II. Chronicles,	Zephaniah,	Hebrews,
Ezra,	Haggai,	Epistle of James,
Nehemiah,	Zechariah,	I. Peter,
Esther,	Malachi,	II. Peter,
Job,	Matthew,	I. John,
Psalms,	Mark,	II. John,
Proverbs,	Luke,	III. John,
Ecclesiastes,	John,	Jude,
Song of Solomon,	Acts of the Apostles,	Revelation.

[1] Articles of the Episcopal Church, Art. VI, and of the Discipline of the Methodist Church, Art. V.

All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration are no part of the canon of Scripture.[2]

Art. II. *Of God and the Trinity*

Our churches with one accord teach, that there is one God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible; and yet that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[3]

Art. III. *Of the Son of God and the Atonement*

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, assumed human nature, so that the two natures human and divine, united in one person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man; born of the virgin Mary; and truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might be a sacrifice for the sins of man.[4]

Art. IV. *Of Human Depravity*

God having made a covenant of works and of life thereupon with our first parents; they, seduced by the subtility and temptation of Satan, did wilfully transgress and break the covenant by eating the forbidden fruit.[5] By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin.[6] They being the root of all mankind, a corrupted nature is conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.[7] The condition of man after the fall of Adam, is such,[8] that his will is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined

[2] Ratio Disciplinæ or Constitution of the Congregational Churches, Art. I, P. 2, 3. Confession of the Presbyterian Church, Art. I, P. 2, 3. Confession of the Baptist Churches, (adopted in 1742,) chapter I, P. 2, 3. The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Church is also of the same general doctrinal import.

[3] Lutheran and Moravian (United Brethren's) Confession, Art. I.

[4] Idem, Art. III. according to the translation contained in the writer's "Popular Theology."

[5] Congregational, Art. VI, 1.

[6] Presbyterian, Art. VI, 2.

[7] Congregational, Art. VI, 3. Baptist, Chap. VI, P. 3.

[8] Episcopal, Art. X.

to do good or evil: [9] but it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God.[10]

Art. V. *Of Justification*

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith; and not for our own works or deservings.[11] This faith must bring forth good fruits; and it is our duty to perform those good works which God has commanded, because he has enjoined them, and not in the expectation of thereby meriting justification before him.[12] Good works cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgement.[13]

Art. VI. *Of the Church*

The visible church, which is catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation), consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unto this catholic, visible church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God.[14] For the true unity of the church, it is not necessary that the same rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere observed.[15] The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; [16] nevertheless, Christ always hath had and ever shall have a visible Kingdom in this world to the end thereof, of such as believe in him and make profession of his name.[17] There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the pope of Rome in any sense be the head thereof.[18]

Art. VII. *Of the Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper*

The sacraments were instituted not only as marks of a christian profession among men; but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them.[19] There be only

[9] Baptist, Presbyt. and Congreg. IX, 1.
[10] Lutheran and Moravian Conf. Art. XVIII.
[11] Episcopal Conf. Art. XI. and Methodist, Art. IX.
[12] Lutheran and Moravian Conf. Art. VI.
[13] Methodist Discip. Art. X. and Episcopal Conf. Art. XII.
[14] Presbyterian Conf. Art. XXV, 2, 3.
[15] Lutheran and Moravian, Art. VII.
[16] Presb. XXV, 3, and Cong. XXVI, 3. Baptist, Chap. XXVII, P. 3.
[17] Congregational Conf. Art. XXVI, 3. Baptist, Chap. XXVII, P. 3.
[18] Congr. XXVI, 4, and Presb. XXV, 6.
[19] Lutheran and Moravian Conf. Art. XIII.

two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.[20] Baptism is ordained not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also to be unto him a sign of the covenant of grace, of regeneration, of remission of sins,[21] and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.[22] The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves; but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death.[23]

In this sacrament Christ is not offered up, nor any real sacrifice made at all, for remission of sins of the quick or dead; so that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice.[24] That doctrine which maintains a change of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or in any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason.[25] The denying of the cup to the people, and worshipping the elements, or carrying them about for adoration, are all contrary to the institution of Christ.[26]

Art. VIII. *Of Purgatory, etc.*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, worshipping as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is repugnant to the word of God.[27]

Art. IX. *Liberty of Conscience*

God alone is the Lord of conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any wise contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and, the requiring

[20] Presb. Art. XXVII, 4. and Congr. XXVIII, 4.

[21] Presb. Art. XXVIII, 1.

[22] Baptist, Chap. XXX, P. 1. Presb. Art. XXVII, P. 1. Cong. Art. XXIX, P. 1.

[23] Methodist Disc. Art. XVIII, and Episc. Art. XXVIII.

[24] Presb. Art. XXIX, 2, and Cong. XXX, 2. Baptist, Ch. XXXII, P. 2.

[25] Baptist, Ch. XXXII, P. 6. Presb. Conf. Art. XXIX, 6, and Cong. XXX, 6.

[26] Presb. XXIX, 4. Cong. XXX, 4. Baptist, Chap. XXXII, P. 4.

[27] Methodist Disc. Art. XIV, and Episcopal, Art. XXII.

of an implicit faith and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.[28]

Art. X. *Of Civil Government*

God the supreme Lord and king of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end hath armed them with power, for the defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.[29] The power of the civil magistrate extendeth to all men, as well clergy as laity in things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual.[30] Christians ought to yield obedience to the civil officers and laws of the land; unless they should command something sinful; in which case it is a duty to obey God rather than man.[31]

Art. XI. *Communion of Saints*

Saints are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; As also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities; which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.[32]

Art. XII. *Of the Future Judgment and Retribution*

At the end of the world Christ will appear for judgment, he will raise the dead, he will give to the pious eternal life and endless joys; but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end.[33] As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded, that there shall be a day of judgment, to deter all men from sin; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.*[34]

[28] Presb. XX, 2. Baptist, XXI, P. 2.
[29] Cong. XXIV, 1, and Presb. XXIII, 1. Baptist, XXV, P. 1.
[30] Episc. XXXVII.
[31] Lutheran and Moravian, Art. XVI.
[32] Cong. XXVII, 2, and Presb. XXVI, 2. Baptist, Ch. XXVIII, P. 1.
[33] Lutheran and Moravian Conf. Art. XVII.
[34] Baptist, Ch. XXXIV, P. 3. Presbyterian, XXXIII, 3. Congregational, XXXII, 3.

APPENDIX B

CONFESSIO AUGUSTANA

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION OF 1530	THE "AMERICAN RECENSION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION" OF 1855
. . . . .	
. . . . . [1]	
PART FIRST [2]	
Chief Articles of Faith	
Art. I.—*Of God*	Article I.—*Of God*
The churches, with common consent among us, do teach that the decree of the Nicene Synod concerning the unity of the divine essence and of the three persons is true, and without doubt to be believed: to wit, that there is one divine essence which is called and is God, eternal, without body, indivisible [without part],[3] of infinite power, wisdom,	Our churches with one accord teach, that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the Divine essence, and concerning the three persons, is true, and ought to be confidently believed, viz: that there is one divine essence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator

[1] A Preface, of considerable length, introduces the Articles of Faith, in the original edition.

[2] The English translation here used is that found in Volume III "The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations" of *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiæ Universalis.—The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes.* By Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.—In Three Volumes —Fourth Edition—Revised and Enlarged.—N. Y.

[3] Dr. Schaff remarks, "I have inserted in brackets the most important additions of the German text." Introductory Note, p. 3, *op. cit.*

goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and that yet there are three persons of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And they use the name of person in that signification in which the ecclesiastical writers [the fathers] have used it in this cause, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which properly subsists.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this Article, as the Manichees, who set down two principles, good and evil; in the same manner the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such like. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new; who, when they earnestly contend that there is but one person, do craftily and wickedly trifle, after the manner of rhetoricians, about the Word and Holy Ghost, that they are not distinct persons, but that the Word signifieth a vocal word, and the Spirit a motion created in things.

and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; and yet, that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the term person they use in the same sense in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject: to signify, not a part or quality of something else, but that which exists of itself.

Art. II.—*Of Original Sin*

Also they teach that, after Adam's fall, all men begotten after the common course of nature are born with sin; that is, without the fear of God, without trust in him, and with fleshly ap-

Article II.—*Of Natural Depravity*

Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards Him, and with

petite; and that this disease, or original fault, is truly sin, condemning and bringing eternal death now also upon all that are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

They condemn the Pelagians, and others, who deny this original fault to be sin indeed; and who, so as to lessen the glory of the merits and benefits of Christ, argue that a man may, by the strength of his own reason, be justified before God.

Art. III.—*Of the Son of God*

Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, took unto him man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably joined together in unity of person; one Christ, true God and true man: who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that he might reconcile the Father unto us, and might be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

The same also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day. Afterward he ascended into the heavens that he might sit at the right hand of the Father; and reign forever, and have dominion over all creatures; might sanctify those that

sinful propensities; and that this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin, and still causes eternal death to those who are not born again. And they reject the opinion of those, who, in order that they may detract from the glory of the merits and benefits of Christ, allege that man may be justified before God by the powers of his own reason.

Article III.—*Of the Son of God and His Mediatorial Work*

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, assumed human nature, in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man, born of the Virgin Mary; who truly suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original sin, but also for all the actual sins of men. Likewise that he descended into hell, (the place of departed spirits) and truly arose on the third day; then ascended to heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of the Father, might perpetually reign over all creatures, and might sanctify those who believe in him, by sending into their

believe in him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts, who shall rule [sanctify, purify, strengthen], comfort, and quicken them, and shall defend them against the devil, and the power of sin.

The same Christ shall openly come again, to judge the quick and the dead, according as the Apostles' Creed declareth these and other things.

hearts the Holy Spirit, who governs, consoles, quickens, and defends them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead, &c., according to the Apostolic Creed.

Art. IV.—*Of Justification*

Also they teach that men can not be justified [obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness] before God by their own powers, merits, or works; but are justified freely [of grace] for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and their sins forgiven for Christ's sake, who by his death hath satisfied for our sins. This faith doth God impute for righteousness before him. Rom. iii. and iv.

Article IV.—*Of Justification*

They in like manner teach, that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works; but that they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith; when they believe, that they are received into favor, and that their sins are remitted on account of Christ, who made satisfaction for our transgressions by his death. This faith God imputes to us as righteousness. Rom. 3:4.

Art. V.—*Of the Ministry of the Church*

For the obtaining of this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.

For by the Word and Sacraments, as by instruments, the Holy Spirit is given: who worketh faith, where and when it pleaseth God, in those that hear

Article V.—*Of the Ministerial Office*

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministerial office has been instituted, whose members are to teach the gospel, and administer the sacraments. For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, as means of grace, the Holy Spirit is given, who, in his own time

the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our merit's sake, but for Christ's sake, doth justify those who believe that they for Christ's sake, are received into favor.

They condemn the Anabaptists and others, who imagine that the Holy Spirit is given to men without the outward word, through their own preparations and works.

and place, (or more literally, when and where it pleases God) produces faith in those who hear the gospel message, namely, that God, for Christ's sake, and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe that on account of Christ they are received into (the divine) favor.

Art. VI.—*Of New Obedience*

Also they teach that this faith should bring forth good fruits, and that men ought to do the good works commanded of God, because it is God's will, and not on any confidence of meriting justification before God by their works.

For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ witnesseth: "When ye have done all these things, say, We are unprofitable servants."

The same also do the ancient writers of the Church teach; for Ambrose saith: "This is ordained of God, that he that believeth in Christ shall be saved, without works, by faith alone, freely receiving remission of sins."

Article VI.—*Concerning New Obedience (or a Christian Life)*

They likewise teach, that this faith must bring forth good fruits; and that it is our duty to perform those good works which God has commanded, because he has enjoined them, and not in the expectation of thereby meriting justification before him. For, remission of sins and justification are secured by faith; as the declaration of Christ himself implies: "When ye shall have done all those things, say, we are unprofitable servants."

The same thing is taught by the ancient ecclesiastical writers: for Ambrose says, "this has been ordained by God, that he who believes in Christ is saved without works, receiving remission of sins gratuitously through faith alone."

Art. VII.—*Of the Church*

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever.

Article VII.—*Of the Church*

They likewise teach, that there will always be one holy church.

But the Church is the congregation of saints [the assembly of all believers], in which the Gospel is rightly taught [purely preached] and the Sacraments rightly administered [according to the Gospel].

And unto the true unity of the Church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike everywhere, as St. Paul saith: "There is one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

Art. VIII.—*What the Church is*

Though the Church be properly the congregation of saints and true believers, yet seeing that in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled with it, it is lawful to use the Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the voice of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 2): "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," and the words following. And the Sacraments and the Word are effectual, by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, though they be delivered by evil men.

They condemn the Donatists and such like, who denied that it was lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and

The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered. And for the true unity of the church nothing more is required, than agreement concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary, that the same human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be everywhere observed. As Paul says: "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," &c.

Article VIII.—*What the Church is*

Although the church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers; yet in the present life, many hypocrites and wicked men are mingled with them.

held that the ministry of evil men is useless and without effect.

Art. IX.—*Of Baptism*

Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that by Baptism the grace of God is offered, and that children are to be baptized, who by Baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favor.

They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the Baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without Baptism.

Article IX.—*Concerning Baptism*

Concerning baptism, our churches teach, that it is "a necessary ordinance," that is a means of grace, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God, and received into his favor.

Art. X.—*Of the Lord's Supper*

Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the [true] body and blood of Christ are truly present [under the form of bread and wine], and are [there] communicated to those that eat in the Lord's Supper [and received]. And they disapprove of those that teach otherwise [wherefore also the opposite doctrine is rejected].

Article X.—*Of the Lord's Supper*

In regard to the Lord's Supper they teach that Christ is present with the communicants in the Lord's Supper, "under the emblems of bread and wine."

Art. XI.—*Of Confession*

Concerning confession, they teach that private absolution be retained in the churches, though enumeration of all offenses be not necessary in confession. For it is impossible; according to the Psalm: "Who can understand his errors?"

Article XI.—*Of Confession*

[As Private Confession and Absolution, which are inculcated in this Article, though in a modified form, have been universally rejected by the American Lutheran Church, the omission of this Article is demanded by the principle on which the American Recension of the Augsburg Con-

fession is constructed; namely, to omit the several portions, which are rejected by the great mass of our churches in this country, and to add nothing in their stead.]

Art. XII.—*Of Repentance*

Touching repentance, they teach that such as have fallen after baptism may find remission of sins, at what time they are converted [whenever they come to repentance], and that the Church should give absolution unto such as return to repentance.

Now repentance consisteth properly of these two parts: One is contrition, or terrors stricken into the conscience through the acknowledgment of sin; the other is faith, which is conceived by the Gospel, or absolution, and doth believe that for Christ's sake sins be forgiven, and comforteth the conscience, and freeth it from terrors. Then should follow good works, which are fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that men once justified can lose the Spirit of God, and do contend that some men may attain to such a perfection in this life that they can not sin. [Here are rejected those who teach that those who have once been holy can not fall

Article XII.—*Of Repentance (after Backsliding)*

Concerning repentance they teach, that those who have relapsed into sin after baptism, may at any time obtain pardon, when they repent. But repentance properly consists of two parts. The one is contrition, or being struck with terrors of conscience, on account of acknowledged sin. The other is faith, which is produced by the gospel; which believes that pardon for sin is bestowed for Christ's sake; which tranquilizes the conscience, and liberates it from fear. Such repentance must be succeeded by good works as its fruits.

again.] The Novatians are also condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after baptism, though they returned to repentance. They also that do not teach that remission of sins is obtained by faith, and who command us to merit grace by satisfactions, are rejected.

Art. XIII.—*Of the Use of Sacraments*

Concerning the use of the Sacraments, they teach that they were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather that they should be signs and testimonies of the will of God towards us, set forth unto us to stir up and confirm faith in such as use them. Therefore men must use Sacraments so as to join faith with them, which believes the promises that are offered and declared unto us by the Sacraments.

Wherefore they condemn those that teach that the Sacraments do justify by the work done, and do not teach that faith which believes the remission of sins is requisite in the use of Sacraments.

Art. XIV.—*Of Ecclesiastical Orders*

Concerning Ecclesiastical Orders [Church Government], they teach that no man should publicly in the Church teach, or ad-

Article XIII.—*Of the Use of the Sacraments*

Concerning the use of the sacraments our churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men; but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them. Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith in the promises which are exhibited and proposed by them.

They therefore condemn the opinion of those who maintain, that the sacraments produce justification in their recipients as a matter of course, and who do not teach that faith is necessary, in the reception of the sacraments, to the remission of sins.

Article XIV.—*Of Church Orders, (or the Ministry)*

Concerning church orders they teach, that no person ought publicly to teach "or preach," in the church, or to administer the sac-

minister the Sacraments, except he be rightly called [without a regular call].

Art. XV.—*Of Ecclesiastical Rites*

Concerning Ecclesiastical rites [made by men], they teach that those rites are to be observed which may be observed without sin, and are profitable for tranquillity and good order in the Church; such as are set holidays, feasts, and such like. Yet concerning such things, men are to be admonished that consciences are not to be burdened as if such service were necessary to salvation.

They are also to be admonished that human traditions, instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning foods and days, and such like, instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

Art. XVI.—*Of Civil Affairs*

Concerning civil affairs, they teach that such civil ordinances as are lawful are good works of God; that Christians may lawfully bear civil office, sit in judgments, determine matters by the

raments, without a regular call.

Article XV.—*Of Religious Ceremonies*

Concerning ecclesiastical ceremonies they teach, that those ceremonies ought to be observed, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the church, such as certain holy-days, festivals, &c. Concerning matters of this kind, however, men are cautioned, lest their consciences be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation. They are also admonished that human traditionary observances, instituted with a view to appease God, and to merit his favor, and make satisfaction for sins, are contrary to the gospel and the doctrine of faith "in Christ." Wherefore vows and traditionary observances concerning meats, days, &c., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless, and contrary to the gospel.

Article XVI.—*Of Political Affairs*

In regard to political affairs our churches teach that legitimate political enactments are good works of God; that it is lawful for Christians to hold civil offices, to pronounce judg-

imperial laws, and other laws in present force, appoint just punishments, engage in just war, act as soldiers, make legal bargains and contracts, hold property, take an oath when the magistrates require it, marry a wife, or be given in marriage. They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid Christians these civil offices. They condemn also those that place the perfection of the Gospel, not in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, inasmuch as the Gospel teacheth an everlasting righteousness of the heart. In the meantime, it doth not disallow order and government of commonwealths or families, but requireth especially the preservation and maintenance thereof, as of God's own ordinances, and that in such ordinances we should exercise love. Christians, therefore, must necessarily obey their magistrates and laws, save only when they command any sin; for then they must rather obey God than men (Acts v. 29).

ment, and decide cases according to existing laws; to inflict just punishment, wage just wars, and serve in them; to make lawful contracts; hold property; to make oath when required by the magistrate, to marry, and to be married.

Hence Christians ought necessarily to yield obedience to their civil officers and laws; unless they should command something sinful; in which case it is a duty to obey God rather than man. **Acts 5: 29.**

Art. XVII.—*Of Christ's Return to Judgment*

Also they teach that, in the consummation of the world [at the last day], Christ shall appear to judge, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys; but ungodly

Article XVII.—*Of Christ's Return to Judgment*

Our churches also teach, that at the end of the world, Christ will appear for judgment; that he will raise all the dead; that he will bestow upon the pious and elect eternal life and endless joys, but will condemn

men and the devils shall he condemn unto endless torments.

They condemn the Anabaptists who think that to condemned men and the devils shall be an end of torments. They condemn others also, who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being every where suppressed [the saints alone, the pious, shall have a worldly kingdom, and shall exterminate all the godless].

wicked men and devils to be punished without end.

Art. XVIII.—*Of Free Will*

Concerning free will, they teach that man's will hath some liberty to work a civil righteousness, and to choose such things as reason can reach unto; but that it hath no power to work the righteousness of God, or a spiritual righteousness, without the Spirit of God; because that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 14). But this is wrought in the heart when men do receive the Spirit of God through the Word.

These things are in as many words affirmed by St. Augustine, *Hypognosticon*, lib. iii.: "We confess that there is in all men a free will, which hath indeed the judgment of reason; not that it is thereby fitted, without God, either to begin or to perform

Article XVIII.—*Of Free Will*

Concerning free will our churches teach, that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the control of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedience: for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God: but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the word.

The same is declared by Augustine in so many words: "We confess that all men have a free will, which possesses the judgment of reason, by which they cannot indeed, without the divine aid, either begin or certain-

anything in matters pertaining to God, but only in works belonging to this present life, whether they be good or evil. By good works, I mean those which are of the goodness of nature; as to will to labor in the field, to desire meat or drink, to desire to have a friend, to desire apparel, to desire to build a house, to marry a wife, to nourish cattle, to learn the art of divers good things, to desire any good thing pertaining to this present life; all which are not without God's government, yea, they are, and had their beginning from God and by God. Among evil things, I account such as these: to will to worship and image; to will manslaughter, and such like."

They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that by the powers of nature alone, without the Spirit of God, we are able to love God above all things; also to perform the commandments of God, as touching the substance of our actions. For although nature be able in some sort to do the external works (for it is able to withhold the hands from theft and murder), yet it can not work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, and such like.

Art. XIX.—*Of the Cause of Sin*

Touching the cause of sin, they

ly accomplish what is becoming in things relating to God; but only in "outward" works of the present life, as well good as evil. In good works, I say, which arise from our natural goodness, such as to choose to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to choose to have a friend, to have clothing, to build a house, to take a wife, to feed cattle, to learn various and useful arts, or to do any good thing relative to this life; all which things, however, do not exist without the divine government; yea, they exist and begin to be from Him and through Him. And in evil works (men have a free will), such as to choose to worship an idol, to will to commit murder, &c."

It is not possible by the mere powers of nature, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, to love God above all things, and to do his commands according to their intrinsic design. For, although nature may be able, after a certain manner, to perform external actions, such as to abstain from theft, from murder, &c., yet it cannot perform the inner motions, such as the fear of God, faith in God, chastity, patience, &c.

Article XIX.—*Of the Author of Sin*

On this subject they teach,

teach that, although God doth create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked; to wit, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, God not aiding, turneth itself from God, as Christ saith: "When he speaketh a lie; he speaketh of his own" (John viii. 44).

that although God is the Creator and Preserver of nature, the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the devil and of wicked men, which, when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God: agreeably to the declaration of Christ, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own."—John viii. 44.

Art. XX.—*Of Good Works*

Ours are falsely accused of forbidding good works. For their writings extant upon the Ten Commandments, and others of the like argument, do bear witness that they have to good purpose taught concerning every kind of life, and its duties; what kinds of life, and what works in every calling, do please God. Of which things preachers in former times taught little or nothing: only they urged certain childish and needless works; as, keeping of holidays, set fasts, fraternities, pilgrimages, worshiping of saints, the use of rosaries, monkery, and such like things. Whereof our adversaries having had warning, they do now unlearn them, and do not preach concerning these unprofitable works, as they were wont. Besides, they begin now to make mention of faith, concerning which there was formerly a deep silence. They teach that we are not justified by works alone; but

Article XX.—*Of Good Works*

Our writers are falsely accused of prohibiting good works. Their publications on the ten commandments, and other similar subjects, show, that they gave good instructions concerning all the different stations and duties of life, and explained what course of conduct, in any particular calling, is pleasing to God. Concerning these things, preachers formerly said very little, but urged the necessity of puerile and useless works, such as certain holy-days, fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, worship of saints, rosaries, monastic vows, &c. These useless things, our adversaries, having been admonished, now unlearn, and no longer teach as formerly. Moreover, they now begin to make mention of faith, about which they formerly observed a marvellous silence. They now teach, that we are not justified by works alone, but join faith to works, and maintain that we are

they conjoin faith and works, and say we are justified by faith and works. Which doctrine is more tolerable than the former one, and can afford more consolation than their old doctrine.

Where as, therefore, the doctrine of faith, which should be the chief one in the Church, hath been so long unknown, as all men must needs grant, that there was the deepest silence about the righteousness of faith in their sermons, and that the doctrine of works was usual in the churches; for this cause our divines did thus admonish the churches:

First, that our works can not reconcile God, or deserve remission of sins, grace, and justification at his hands, but that these we obtain by faith only, when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed the Mediator and Propitiatory, by whom the Father is reconciled. He, therefore, that trusteth by his works to merit grace, doth despise the merit and grace of Christ, and seeketh by his own power, without Christ, to come unto the Father; whereas Christ hath said expressly of himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6).

This doctrine of faith is handled by Paul almost every where: "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than their former belief, and is calculated to impart more consolation to the mind. Inasmuch, then, as the doctrine concerning faith, which should be regarded as a principal one by the church, had so long been unknown; for all must confess, that concerning the righteousness of faith, the most profound silence reigned in their sermons, and the doctrine concerning works alone was discussed in the churches; our divines have admonished the churches as follows:—

First, that our works cannot reconcile God, merit the remission of sins, and grace, and justification: but this we can attain only by faith, when we believe that we are received into favor, for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed our mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by whom the Father can be reconciled. He, therefore, who expects to merit grace by his works, casts contempt on the merits and grace of Christ, and is seeking the way to God, in his own strength, without the Savior; who nevertheless has told us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This doctrine concerning faith, is incessantly inculcated by the apostle Paul (Ephes. ii), "Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," not of

not of works" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). And lest any here should cavil, that we bring in a new-found interpretation, this whole cause is sustained by testimonies of the Fathers. Augustine doth in many volumes defend grace, and the righteousness of faith, against the merit of works. The like doth Ambrose teach in his book, *De Vocatione Gentium,* and elsewhere; for thus he saith of the calling of the Gentiles: "The redemption made by the blood of Christ would be of small account, and the prerogative of man's works would not give place to the mercy of God, if the justification which is by grace were due to merits going before; so as it should not be the liberality of the giver, but the wages or hire of the laborer."

This doctrine, though it be contemned of the unskillful, yet godly and fearful consciences find by experience that it bringeth very great comfort: because that consciences can not be quieted by any works, but by faith alone, when they believe assuredly that they have a God who is propitiated for Christ's sake; as St. Paul teacheth, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). This doctrine doth wholly belong to the conflict of a troubled conscience; and can not be understood, but where the conscience hath felt that conflict. Wherefore, all

works, &c. And lest any one should cavil at our interpretation, and charge it with novelty, we state that this whole matter is supported by the testimony of the fathers. For Augustin devotes many volumes to the defence of grace, and the righteousness of faith, in opposition to the merit of good works. And Ambrosius, on the calling of the Gentiles, &c., inculcates the same doctrine. For thus he says, concerning the calling of the Gentiles: "Redemption by the blood of Christ is of little value, nor is the honor of human works subordinated to the mercy of God, if justification, which is of grace, is supposed to be merited by previous works, so as to be not the gift of him that bestows it, but the reward of him that earned it." But although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, the consciences of the pious and timid find it a source of much consolation, for they cannot attain peace of conscience in any works, but in faith alone, when they entertain the confident belief that, for Christ's sake, God is reconciled to them. Thus Paul teaches us (Rom. v.), "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This whole doctrine must be referred to the conflict in the conscience of the alarmed sinner, nor can it be otherwise understood. Hence the inexperienced

such as have had no experience thereof, and all that are profane men, who dream that Christian righteousness is naught else but a civil and philosophical righteousness, are poor judges of this matter.

Formerly men's consciences were vexed with the doctrine of works; they did not hear any comfort out of the Gospel. Whereupon conscience drove some into the desert, into monasteries, hoping there to merit grace by a monastical life. Others devised other works, whereby to merit grace, and to satisfy for sin. There was very great need, therefore, to teach and renew this doctrine of faith in Christ; to the end that fearful consciences might not want comfort, but might know that grace, and forgiveness of sins, and justification, are received by faith in Christ.

Another thing, which we teach men, is that in this place the name of Faith doth not only signify a knowledge of the history, which may be in the wicked, and in the devil, but that it signifieth a faith which believeth, not only the history, but also the effect of the history; to wit, the article of remission of sins; namely, that by Christ we have grace, righteousness, and remission of sins. Now he that knoweth that he hath the Father merciful to him through Christ,

and worldly-minded are much mistaken, who vainly imagine that the righteousness of the Christian is nothing else than what in common life and in the language of philosophy is termed morality.

Formerly the consciences of men were harassed by the doctrine of works, nor did they hear any consolation from the gospel. Some conscience drove into deserts, and into monasteries, hoping there to merit the divine favor by a monastic life. Others invented different kinds of works, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for their sins. There was therefore the utmost necessity, that this doctrine concerning faith in Christ should be inculcated anew; in order that timid minds might find consolation, and know that justification and the remission of sins are obtained by faith in the Savior. The people are also now instructed, that faith does not signify a mere historical belief, such as wicked men and devils have; but that in addition to a historical belief, it includes an acquaintance with the consequences of the history, such as remission of sins, by grace through Christ, righteousness, &c., &c.

Now he who knows that the Father is reconciled to him through Christ, possesses a true acquaintance with God, confides

this man knoweth God truly; he knoweth that God hath a care for him; he loveth God, and calleth upon him; in a word, he is not without God, as the Gentiles are. For the devils and the wicked can never believe this article of the remission of sins; and therefore they hate God as their enemy; they call not upon him, they look for no good thing at his hands. After this manner doth Augustine admonish the reader touching the name of Faith, and teacheth that this word Faith is taken in Scriptures, not for such a knowledge as is in the wicked, but for a trust, which doth comfort and lift up disquieted minds.

Moreover, ours teach that it is necessary to do good works; not that we may trust that we deserve grace by them, but because it is the will of God that we should do them. By faith alone is apprehended remission of sins and grace. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, our hearts are now renewed, and so put on new affections, so that they are able to bring forth good works. For thus saith Ambrose: "Faith is the begetter of a good will and of good actions." For man's powers, without the Holy Spirit, are full of wicked affections, and are too weak to perform any good deed before God. Besides, they are in the devil's power, who driveth men in his providence, and calls upon his name: and is therefore not without God as are the Gentiles. For the devil and wicked men cannot believe the article concerning the remission of sins. But they hate God as an enemy, do not call upon his name, nor expect anything good at his hands. Augustin, in speaking of the word faith, admonishes the reader that in Scripture this word does not signify mere knowledge, such as wicked men possess, but that confidence or trust, by which alarmed sinners are comforted and lifted up. We moreover teach, that the performance of good works is necessary, because it is commanded of God, and not because we expect to merit grace by them. Pardon of sins and grace are obtained only by faith. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, the heart of man is renovated, and new affections produced, that he may be able to perform good works. Accordingly Ambrosius states, faith is the source of holy volitions and an upright life. For the faculties of man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, are replete with sinful propensities, and too feeble to perform works that are good in the sight of God. They are moreover under the influence of Satan, who urges men to various sins, and impious opinions, and open crimes; as may

forward into divers sins, into profane opinions, and into heinous crimes; as was to be seen in the philosophers, who, assaying to live an honest life, could not attain unto it, but were defiled with many heinous crimes. Such is the weakness of man, when he is without faith and the Holy Spirit, and hath no other guide but the natural powers of man.

Hereby every man may see that this doctrine is not to be accused, as forbidding good works; but rather is much to be commended, because it showeth after what sort we must do good works. For without faith the nature of man can by no means perform the works of the First or Second Table. Without faith, it can not call upon God, hope in God, bear the cross; but seeking help from man, and trusteth in man's help. So it cometh to pass that all lusts and human counsels bear sway in the heart so long as faith and trust in God are absent.

Wherefore, also, Christ saith, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5.), and the Church singeth, "Without thy power is naught in man, naught that is innocent."

Art. XXI.—*Of the Worship of Saints*

Touching the worship of saints, they teach that the memBe seen in the examples of the philosophers who, though they endeavored to lead moral lives, failed to accomplish their designs, and were guilty of many notorious crimes. Such is the imbecility of man, when he undertakes to govern himself by his own strength without faith and the Holy Spirit.

From all this it is manifest, that our doctrine, instead of being charged with prohibiting good works, ought much rather to be applauded, for teaching the manner in which truly good works can be performed. For without faith, human nature is incapable of performing the duties either of the first or second table. Without it, man does not call upon God, nor expect anything from him, nor bear the cross: but seeks refuge amongst men, and reposes on human aid. Hence when faith and confidence in God are wanting, all evil desires and human schemes reign in the heart; wherefore Christ also says, "without me ye can do nothing" (John xv.); and the church responds, Without thy favor there is nothing good in man.

Article XXI.—*Of the Invocation of Saints*

Concerning the invocation of saints our churches teach, that

ory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works according to our calling; as the Emperor may follow David's example in making war to drive away the Turks from his country; for either of them is a king. But the Scripture teacheth not to invocate saints, or to ask help of saints, because it propoundeth unto us one Christ the Mediator, Propitiatory, High-Priest, and Intercessor. This Christ is to be invocated, and he hath promised that he will hear our prayers, and liketh this worship especially, to wit, that he be invocated in all afflictions. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with God, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1).

the saints ought to be held in remembrance, in order that we may, each in his own calling, imitate their faith and good works; that the emperor may imitate the example of David, in carrying on war to expel the Turks from our country; for both are kings. But the sacred volume does not teach us to invoke saints or to seek aid from them. For it proposes Christ to us as our only mediator, propitiation, high priest, and intercessor. On his name we are to call, and he promises, that he will hear our prayers, and highly approves of this worship, viz.: that he should be called upon in every affliction (1 John ii.): "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father" &c.

Art. XXII

This is about the sum of doctrine among us, in which can be seen that there is nothing which is discrepant with the Scriptures, or with the Church Catholic, or even with the Roman Church, so far as that Church is known from writers [the writings of the Fathers]. This being the case, they judge us harshly who insist that we shall be regarded as heretics. But the dissension is concerning certain [traditions and] abuses, which without any certain authority have crept into the churches; in which things,

This is about the substance of our doctrines, from which it is evident that they contain nothing inconsistent with the Scriptures. Under these circumstances, those certainly judge harshly, who would have us regarded as heretics. But the difference of opinion between us (and the Romanists) relates to certain abuses, which have crept into the (Romish) churches without any good authority; in regard to which, if we do differ, the bishops ought to treat us with lenity and tolerate us, on ac-

even if there were some difference, yet would it be a becoming lenity on the part of the bishops that, on account of the Confession which we have now presented, they should bear with us, since not even the Canons are so severe as to demand the same rites everywhere, nor were the rites of all churches at any time the same. Although among us in large part the ancient rites are diligently observed. For it is a calumnious falsehood, that all the ceremonies, all the things instituted of old, are abolished in our churches. But the public complaint was that certain abuses were connected with the rites in common use. These, because they could not with good conscience be approved, have to some extent been corrected.

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count of the confession which we have just made.

[4] Here follows PART SECOND in the original edition.

APPENDIX C

DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA [1]

Article II—Doctrinal Basis

Section 1. The United Lutheran Church in America receives and holds the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and as the only infallible rule and standard of faith and practice, according to which all doctrines and teachers are to be judged.

Section 2. The United Lutheran Church in America accepts the three ecumenical creeds: namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, as important testimonies drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and rejects all errors which they condemn.

Section 3. The United Lutheran Church in America receives and holds the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a correct exhibition of the faith and doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded upon the Word of God; and acknowledges all churches that sincerely hold and faithfully confess the doctrines of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be entitled to the name of Evangelical Lutheran.

Section 4. The United Lutheran Church in America recognizes the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalkald Articles, the Large and Small Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord, as in the harmony of one and the same pure Scriptural faith.

[1] *Minutes of the First Convention of the United Lutheran Church in America.—New York City, November 14–18, 1918.* Page 63. "Constitution of the United Lutheran Church in America . . ."

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